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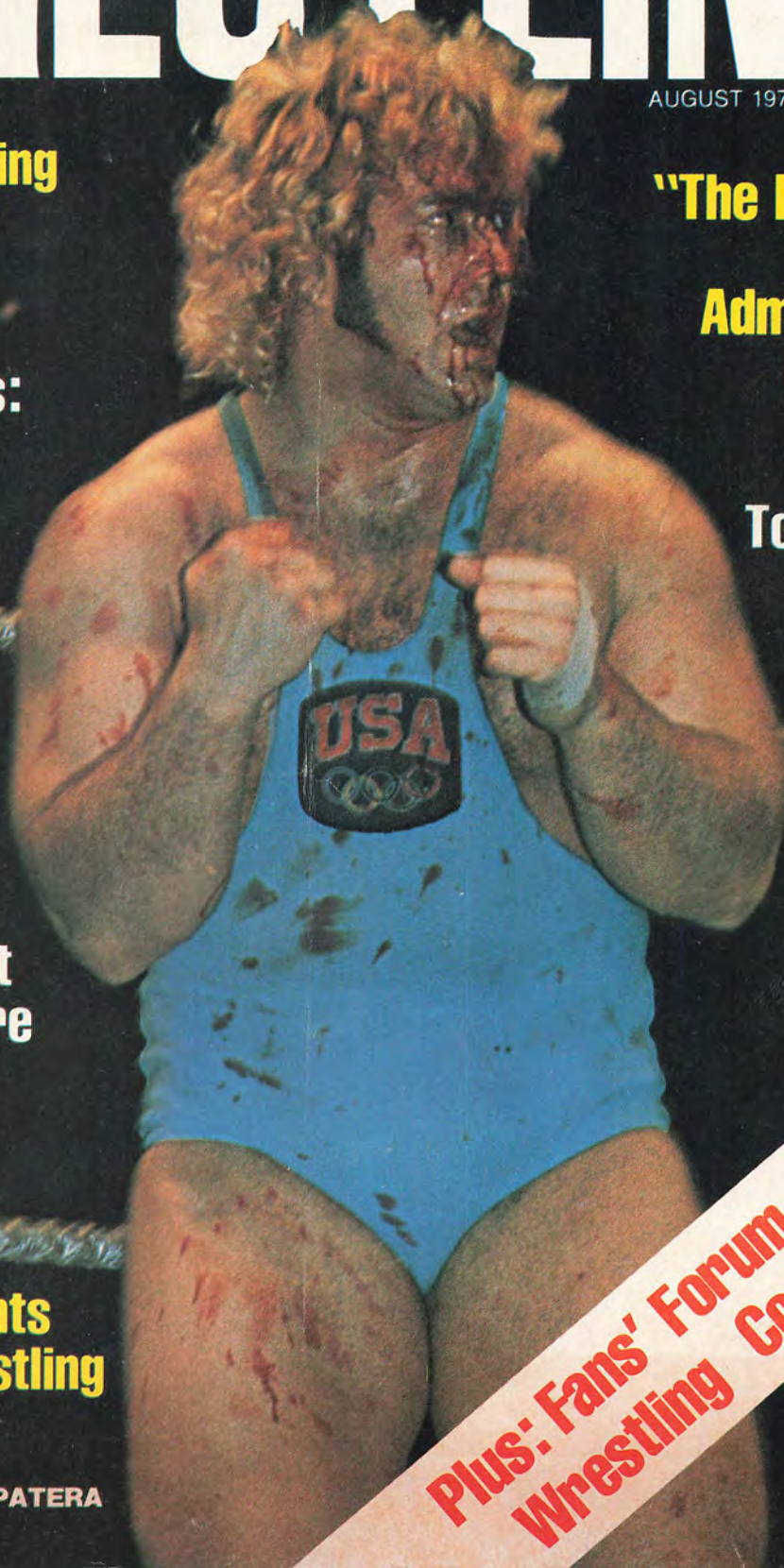

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POPULAR WRESTLING

CONTENTS **AUGUST 1977**

Articles

A Tribute to Antonino Rocca
by Frank Amato 16

Ken Patera Vows: "I'll Be The Next Living Legend of Wrestling!"
by Frank Amato 19

Is Somebody Trying To Kill The Grand Wizard?
by Ernie Salvatore 24

The Alaskan Must Be Stopped Before He Kills Again!
by G.J. Rowell 28

Raul Mata: Mexico's Young Mat Star Is Making It In The U.S.A.
by Allan Bolte 36

Tony Marino Wants To Clean Up Wrestling
by Bob Tringali 40

Female Confession: "Loneliness Is My Toughest Enemy!" Admits Peggy Patterson
by Bob Tringali 42

Larry Zbyzsko: In The Footsteps Of Bruno Sammartino
by Brent Schulz 44

Ray Stevens Declares: "I Enjoy Danger!"
by Allan Bolte 48

Tor Kamata: He Strikes Like A Cobra
by Frank Amato 55

Departments

Popular Ratings 6
Wrestling Confidential 8
Fans Forum 12
Popular Pin-Up 34-35

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Popular Ratings

WORLD WIDE WRESTLING FEDERATION
Champion: BRUNO SAMMARTINO

1. SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM
2. BARON FRITZ VON RASCHKE
3. CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW
4. KEN PATERA
5. IVAN PUTSKI
6. GEORGE STEELE
7. STAN STASIAK
8. TONY GAREA
9. CHIEF BILLY WHITE WOLF
10. LARRY ZBYZSKO

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE
Champion: HARLEY RACE

1. DUSTY RHODES
2. TERRY FUNK
3. MIL MASCARAS
4. THE SHEIK
5. PROF. TORU TANAKA
6. JACK BRISCO
7. DORY FUNK JR.
8. BRUISER FRANK BRODY
9. COWBOY BILL WATTS
10. MR. WRESTLING II

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION
Champion: NICK BOCKWINKLE

1. PEDRO MORALES
2. RAY STEVENS
3. VERNE GAGNE
4. BLACKJACK LANZA
5. CHIEF PETER MAIVIA
6. COWBOY BOB DUNCUM
7. GREG GAGNE
8. BILLY ROBINSON
9. ANGELO MOSCA
10. JIM BRUNZELL

WOMEN WRESTLERS
Champion: FABULOUS MOOLAH

1. VICKIE WILLIAMS
2. VIVIAN ST. JOHN
3. KITTY ADAMS
4. LELANI KAI
5. SUSAN GREENE
6. TONI ROSE
7. JOYCE GRABLE
8. DONNA CHRISTINELLO
9. DAISY MAE
10. TERRI SHAYNE

TOP WRESTLING MANAGERS

1. THE GRAND WIZARD
2. BOBBY HEENAN
3. SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK
4. FRED BLASSIE
5. GARY HART
6. CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO
7. RODDY PIPER
8. DAVE DRASON
9. J.J. DILLON
10. GERHARDT KAISER

TOP TAG TEAMS

1. CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW-CHIEF BILLY WHITE WOLF
2. BLACK GORDMAN-GOLIATH
3. COWBOY BILL WATTS-BILLY ROBINSON
4. JACK and JERRY BRISCO
5. GREG VALENTINE-RIC FLAIR
6. HANDSOME JIMMY-LUSCIOUS JOHNNY VALIANT
7. BLACKJACK LANZA-COWBOY BOB DUNCUM
8. GENE and OLE ANDERSON
9. ROYAL KANGAROOS
10. GREG GAGNE-JIM BRUNZELL

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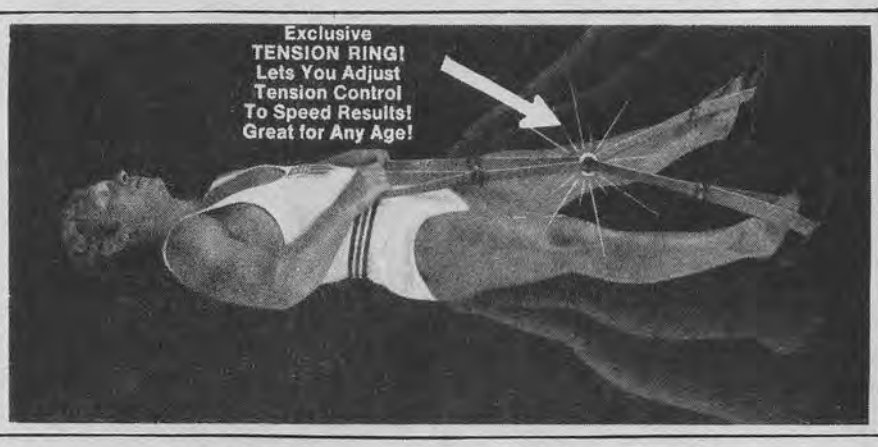

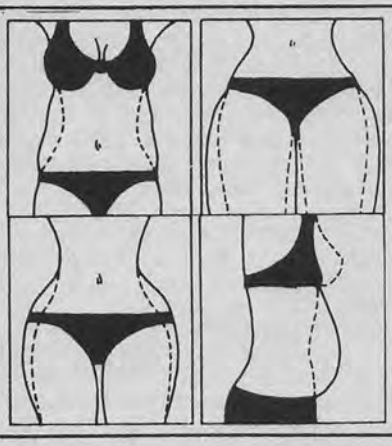

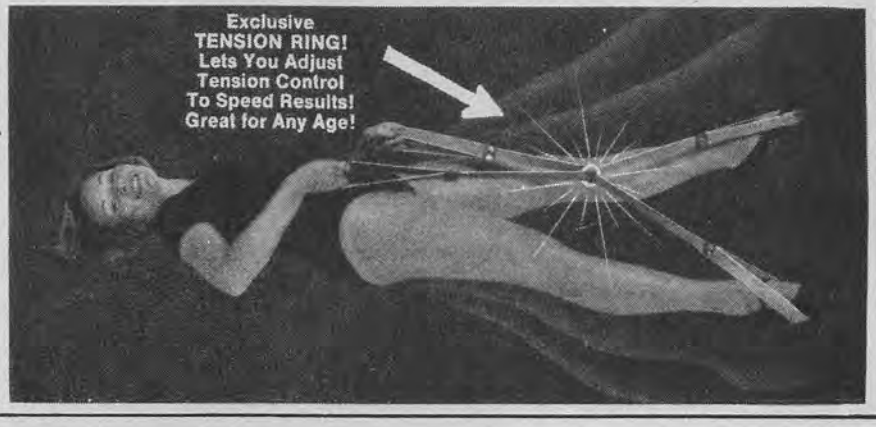

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Wrestling Confidential

BY FRANK AMATO

Above: (upper photo) Frank Amato interviews Stan Stasiak; (lower photo) Waldo Von Erich has captured the NWA North American Championship. Right: (upper photo) The Executioners are trying to regain their WWWF tag title; (middle photo) The world of wrestling mourns the passing of Antonino Rocca shown doing TV commentary with Vince McMahon, Jr.; (lower photo) Superstar Billy Graham jokes with manager The Grand Wizard.

Congratulations to HARLEY RACE for regaining the NWA World Heavyweight Championship from TERRY FUNK on February 6, 1977 in Toronto, Canada. This is the second time around for Race as the champion. He first won the title in May, 1973, from DORY FUNK, JR., Terry's older brother. Meanwhile Race had his first Houston, Texas title defense against DUSTY RHODES and won a squeaker on March 11 . . . COWBOY BILL WATTS and BILLY ROBINSON hold forth as the North American Tag Team Champions. . . . GEORGE "ANIMAL" STEELE invaded the WWWF once again. This time CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO has the managerial chores. Albano purchased Steele's contract from THE GRAND WIZARD . . . GINO HERNANDEZ upset DON "BULLDOG" KENT for the U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP of Detroit-Toronto areas . . . BRUNO SAMMARTINO won yet another Steel Cage Match from BRUISER BRODY in Nassau Coliseum. This was a first for the coliseum . . . THE SHEIK has returned to Detroit and wants to regain the U.S. belt from Hernandez. Sheik had been terrorizing Texas these past months . . . MIL MASCARAS made an appearance in Madison Square Garden recently, beating veteran DOUG GILBERT . . . CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW and CHIEF BILLY WHITE WOLF are still the WWWF World Tag Team Champions. STAN STASIAK and KEN PATERA are hot on their trail . . . JACK and JERRY BRISCO are the Florida State Tag Team Champions . . . IVAN KOLOFF making appearances in St. Louis and San Francisco . . . PROF. TORU TANAKA has taken Southern California by storm. He has won the annual 1977 Battle Royal; Americas Championship; Americas Tag Team Championship with DR. HIRO OTA; and TV Championship. Now Tanaka claims, "I will win the NWA title from HARLEY RACE. It is my destiny." . . . DUSTY RHODES seemingly won the Florida State Title back from SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM, but films showed that Graham had a foot outside the ring. Now the belt has been held up and a tournament is being held. NWA Board of Directors decided belt should go to Graham, but NWA President Eddie Graham favors Rhodes, hence the tournament

WALDO VON ERICH is the North American Champion, having beaten TED DiBIASE who had won the title from THE BRUTE (BUGSY McGRAW) . . . Did you know BOBBY JAGGERS took the Brass Knuckles Title from KEN PATERA in December? But then BRUISER BOB SWEETAN took the title from Jaggers . . . The U.S. Championship of Northern California has been held up and a tournament is in progress. MR. FUJI had been the champion, but PROF. TORU TANAKA tried to pass himself off as Fuji, wearing a mask. He was discovered, so Fuji was stripped of the title . . .

Continued on page 10

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Above: (upper photo) Tony Garea has returned to the WWWF; (lower photo) Prof. Toru Tanaka is winning every title along the west coast. Right: (upper photo) Mil Mascaras has fans cheering all over the country; (middle photo) Billy Robinson is co-holder of the NWA Tag Team Title with Bill Watts; (lower photo) Ken Patera is still trying to win the WWWF title from Bruno Sammartino.

Continued from page 8

OX BAKER took the measure of THE ASSASSIN in Texas Death Match in Florida . . . LARRY ZBYZSKO doing well in WWWF rings, teaming successfully with BOB BACKLUND; TONY GAREA and IVAN PUTSKI . . . SEIGFRIED STANKE invaded Florida with his dreaded Claw . . . BLACK GORDMAN and GOLIATH are being billed as "THE RED DEVILS" in Texas . . . BRUISER BRODY upset FRITZ VON ERICH for the American Championship in Texas . . . RODDY PIPER has brought in EL TIGRE and TANK PATTON to Southern California to rid that area of his enemies . . . NICK BOCKWINKLE managing to hold onto his AWA World Championship despite tough challengers in PEDRO MORALES; CHIEF PETER MAIVIA and RAY STEVENS. Meanwhile, Stevens claims he can win the title: "I turned Bockwinkle into the star he is. He was nothing till we teamed up. I know his style like my own." . . . DUSTY RHODES smashed SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM to defeat him in Steel Cage Bout in Florida . . . BARON FRITZ VON RASCHKE ripping opponents apart with Face Claw. He holds two big victories over CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW. Now Raschke is after BRUNO SAMMARTINO . . . BOB ROOP wrestling in Northern California and wants the title there . . . MIKE GRAHAM and KEVIN SULLIVAN forming a very successful team down south. This should dispel rumors of a feud between the two. They once held the Florida tag belts for two years . . . What is this? TONY PARISI turned mat villain? That is the word I received . . . Also, TONY MARINO donned a mask not long ago and turned villain. Now he's changed back to hero, so I've heard.

CRAZY LUKE GRAHAM in Georgia rings and doing well . . . Are RIP and RANDY TYLER feuding? That is what BOB JAGGERS claims . . . RIC FLAIR and GREG VALENTINE took the Georgia State Tag Title from GENE and OLE ANDERSON . . . JESSE VENTURA and BUDDY ROSE are the Pacific Northwest Tag Team Champs . . . KEN PATERA may well be the self-proclaimed strongest wrestler around, but he can't convince BRUNO SAMMARTINO. So far Ken has failed to dethrone Bruno . . . THE EXECUTIONERS still believe they can regain the WWWF tag belts. So far they have been unsuccessful, much to the chagrin of manager LOU ALBANO . . . SCANDOR AKBAR put his money to good use and purchased the contract of Korean CHOI-SUN . . . COWBOY BOB DUNCUM and BLACKJACK LANZA still reign as AWA World Tag Team Champions . . . Is the elastic elbow bandage of OX BAKER loaded? When questioned on this, Baker exploded, "It's none of your blasted business!" . . . JESSE VENTURA holds the Pacific Northwest Championship . . . COWBOY BOB ELLIS shaved his head? Yep . . . New black tag team in Los Angeles has fans cheering. They are DYNAMITE DON JACKSON and COOL CAT CLARKE . . . CHAVO GUERRERO took the NWA Light Heavyweight Championship from ALFONSO DANTES . . . NIKOLAI VOLKOFF making himself unwelcome to Los Angeles fans . . . STAN HANSEN back in Texas and his Lariat is felling opponents by the score . . . KITTY ADAMS won a seven-woman Battle Royal in Nassau Coliseum in New York. The next night SUSAN GREEN won another seven-woman Battle Royal in Stanford, Connecticut . . . ANDRE THE GIANT won a 17-man Battle

The word is out that Tony Parisi, left, upper photo, has turned mat villain. Say it isn't so, Tony! Ray Stevens, second from top, is gunning for the AWA championship; Germany's Hans Schroeder, third from top, is giving wrestlers trouble in Florida; Chavo Guerrero, bottom photo, has won the NWA World Lightheavyweight Championship.

Royal in Miami Beach, Florida . . . VICTOR RIVERA and TERRY "TOY BULLDOG" SAWYER won the Americas tag belts from PROF. TANAKA and DR. HIRO OTA . . . BUTCHER BRANNIGAN in Texas . . . S.D. JONES scored major upset over NIKOLAI VOLKOFF in WWWF rings . . . LARRY ZBYZSKO also scored big upset over highly ranked TOR KAMATA in just 1:29.

HENRY WINKLER (FONZIE of HAPPY DAYS TV Show) set to play great mat star, the late GORGEOUS GEORGE. By the way have you noticed resemblance of KEN PATERA to GG? Look real close . . . RODDY PIPER and KEN MANTELL spilling each other's blood in Los Angeles. They were once this close . . . STEVE KEIRN still the Southern Champion. Experts predict Steve for future World Champion . . . HANS SCHROEDER in Florida. He and Seigfried Stanke teamed in Texas . . . SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM back in the WWWF and THE GRAND WIZARD is still managing him. Claims Wizard, "This time the WWWF belt will be ours. Graham never was pinned by Sammartino previously. Now time is running out for Bruno." . . . Contrary to rumors, MIL MASCARAS and CIEN CARAS are not related . . . NELSON ROYAL is the NWA World Junior Heavyweight Champion, having beaten RON STARR . . . DUSTY RHODES was named "NWA Wrestler of the Year"—an excellent choice to be sure . . . The world of wrestling was saddened over the unexpected passing of former great mat star and truly one of the all-time greatest, ANTONIO "ARGENTINA" ROCCA. Tony passed away on March 15, 1977 in Roosevelt Hospital after a brief illness. There never has been a wrestler quite like TONY ROCCA. Tony was color TV commentator along with VINCE McMAHON JR. for the WWWF. Tony will be missed by all . . . CRUSHER VERDU in Florida, tearing up the rings there . . . Well, that concludes another WRESTLING CONFIDENTIAL column for this issue. Till next time, keep watching the greatest sport there is. So long.

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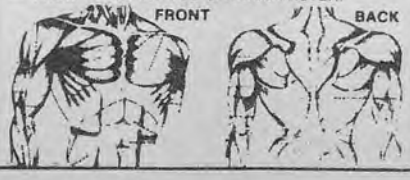

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O.K. Mike Marvel, enclosed is my $3.98. Send me your entire Scientific Isometric Dynaflex System in one book which includes a chapter on: "SECRETS OF ATTRACTING GIRLS." I must agree that the Dynaflex method has given me powerfully toned muscles, put full strength in my muscles, made me so strong that I can be proud to show my friends how strong I am.
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Fans Forum

BY GEORGIANN MAKROPOULOS

Hi again, everyone! It seems like only yesterday that I did my column. Been so busy lately, time's just flying by. I have lots of news, so I'd better get right down to business. *Please* don't forget if an answer is required to your letter, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope or a loose 13¢ stamp.

My husband George and I have again broadened our list of color photos of all the WWWF Wrestling Stars, both dressing room and action shots. Send us a 13¢ stamp and I'll be very glad to send you a new list: Mrs. George Makropoulos; 23-44 30th Drive; Astoria, New York 11102.

Now for the r-e-a-l-l-y B-I-G news, and the main reason why I've been so terribly busy. I have just become Co-President along with my best friend, Mrs. Eleanore Finley, of the INTERNATIONAL KEN PATERA FAN CLUB. The dues are $5.00, for which you will receive a membership card, fact sheet with an 8x10 black and white photo, four 3½x5 color action and posed shots, and bulletins every three or four months, with newsletters out occasionally. Ken gave us permission after only being on the East Coast for two weeks. We were very impressed with his ability as a wrestler and his weightlifting background. This will be a Championship Fan Club for a really nice guy. Why not drop Eleanore or me a line or two for further information. Please make sure a self-addressed stamped envelope is included. Eleanore's address is 25-40 31st Avenue; Astoria, New York 11106. Also, please send any results or photos on Ken to either of the above. You won't be sorry you joined. It's really going to be fun. Eleanore and I are going all out for Ken.

I would like to thank Steve Bartebaugh for being the very first bulletin to list our new Fan Club. Steve's bulletin is the HEADLOCK. HEADLOCK is an excellent publication. Why not send 50 cents for a sample copy to Steve Bartebaugh of 1810 Colfax Street; Evanston, Illinois 60201? Yearly subscription is $5.00.

Above: (upper photo) This is a fan's shot of Ken Patera. Columnist Georgiann Makropoulos has just become Co-President of his fan club. (lower photo) Blackjack Mulligan vs. Dean Ho, photo by Donald L. Freedman, 66 Village Green, Williamsville, N.Y. 14221.

Steve also sends out newsletters.

THE STAN HANSEN FAN CLUB is under the supervision of Tim Norwood; 649 Prospect Street; Chicopee, Mass. 01202. Tim is looking for correspondents from Oklahoma, Miss., La., Texas and areas where Stan is wrestling. *The Lariat* is the name of the bulletin, and if you're a Stan Hansen fan, this club is a must.

Dale Nesmith of 3702 South Wallace Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60609 sends out THE WRESTLING STAMPEDE. Why not send for a copy? The bulletins are bimonthly, covering the AWA and WWWF territory for 75 cents each—20 pages. Yearly $3.50 (six issues)

Karen Beckman has taken over the GREG GAGNE FAN CLUB for Nancy Lutzow. Karen can be reached at 2924 North 44th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53210.

Carol Jean Peddycoart of 409 North 16th Street, Moorehead, Mn. 56560 still running the club for Lumberjack LARRY HENNIG who has recently returned to AWA territory to team with Ray Stevens. Single issues 75 cents. Yearly subscription $3.50 (6 issues).

RASSLIN' WONDERS still going strong under the supervision of Mike Omansky of Box 1196, Union, New Jersey 07083. Mike sends out three issues for the low price of $2.00. Mike's publication is done very professionally and it's very easy reading. You must send for a copy and judge for yourself. Single issues are 75 cents.

I just received word from Tom Savage that he has had to discontinue his AWA REPORT. *AWA Report* is going to be missed; it was an excellent bulletin.

Just received another bulletin from the BILLY WHITE WOLFF FAN CLUB under the clever supervision of Sheila Thibodeau of 5 Coolidge Road, Chicopee, Mass. 01013.

Haven't heard from Barry Rose lately, but last letter I received said that not only has Barry got the BILLY

Continued on page 14

End worries from rust damage

1¢ SALE
BUY 1 for $2.99
Get the Second for 1¢

Amazing "Rust Killer" REMOVES ROTTING RUST AND REPLACES IT WITH FIRM NEW COATING

Incredible rust destroyer brushes on over rusted areas...
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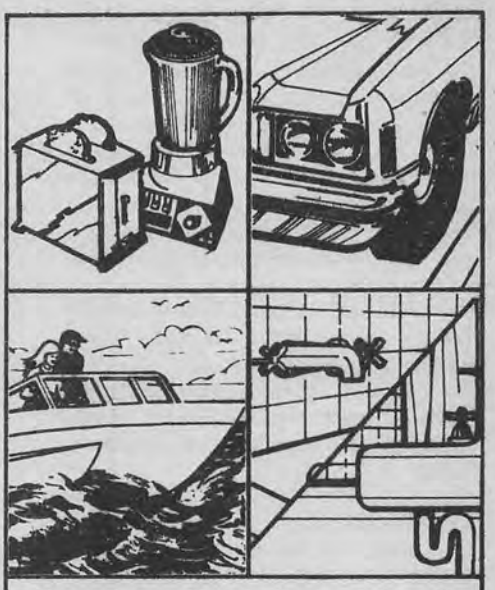
Replaces rust with tough new protective coating

Big ugly blotchy spots of rust eating away at automobile fender. With Rust Killer new coated surface replaces old rusted areas and works on rusted areas only. Simply apply it, re-paint it and rusted spots become invisible.



Stop rust on outdoor furniture, radiator grill, fenders, boats, railings, appliances, refrigerators, toasters, tools, plumbing connections.

Rust looks bad, but that's only the beginning. Those orange, runny looking spots are actually eating away dollars. Rust is eating the body out of your car . . . rotting away metal furniture . . . destroying metal grills and railings. It's destroying constantly and it's costing you money. Now you can end the ugly look of rotting rust and the costly damage with an amazing new compound called *Rust Killer*. It actually replaces deteriorating rust with a *new coated* surface that is guaranteed not to rust again.

New Space Age Miracle Compound

Easy to use. Simply brush it on. It washes off any painted areas adjacent to it, dries in minutes and after it's been applied you simply paint over it with matching colors and no one will ever know that once an ugly destructive rust blemish was eating away at precious metal. So stop scouring, sanding year after year, and stop watching those dollars rust away. Apply *Rust Killer* once and end the worries of costly rust damage. 2 Generous 4 ounce cans, yours for only $3.00.

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Stop watching those thousands of dollars you've got invested in metal around the house rust away. Order Rust Killer now, apply it to lawn furniture, bicycles, iron railings, fenders, radiator grills, any metal exposed to salt air, rain, roads treated with harsh winter chemicals. Rust Killer must prevent rust from returning, showing even the slightest indication or you may return immediately for prompt refund of purchase price.

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FANS FORUM

Continued from page 12

ROBINSON AND ROCKY JOHNSON FAN CLUBS but he has now added TOMMY SEIGLER. The dues are $2.50 for twelve bulletins and a membership card. You may contact Barry at 500 Bayview Drive, Apt. 2023, North Miami Beach, Florida 33160.

Grace Renda of 1575 Roosevelt Avenue, Bohemia, New York 11716 still sending out her bulletin "SQUARED CIRCLE NEWS." Single issue copy is 50 cents. Six issues price at $2.50. Twelve issues $5.00. Back issues are 35 cents.

WRESTLING—John Lawson; 618 South Center Street; Terre Haute, Indiana 47807. "John Lawson's 1976 WWA Yearbook" has photos and results covering everything that happened in the WWA in 1976. It sells for $1.50.

CANADIAN WRESTLING REVUE—Rudy Iseli; 25 Fisherville Road, #809; Willowdale, Ontario, Canada.

JOSE LOTHARIO FAN CLUB under the supervision of Lucy Sanderfer of 12435 East Freeway, #33 Houston, Texas 77015. Thank you Lucy for the 8x10 color photo of Jose and Andre the Giant.

GEORGIA WRESTLING RESULTS—Jerry L. Boyd; Route 2; Box 690; Griffin, Georgia 30223.

Excellent Florida photographers—Mark E. Nelson; 782 St. Anne Drive; Dunedin, Florida 33528. Jim Larcom; 1611 St. Mary Drive; Dunedin, Florida 33528. Ruth Oman;.3011N.W.18thTerrace;Miami, Florida 33125.

BOSTON & PROVIDENCE RINGPOST—Paul Nonnenmacher, Jr., 10 Naples Avenue; Providence, Rhode Island 02908. Excellent publication. Send self-addressed, stamped envelope for further information. Tell him George sent ya!

Rich Barnett of 6222 Copore Way, Baltimore, Maryland 21224 is the skipper of MAT FORUM. Single copies are 75 cents; six bimonthly issues $3.50.

Elliot Stein of 7 Kingston Street, New Hyde Park, New York 11040 wants 25 cents for his photo list. But I received no samples, so I cannot recommend this one.

I would like to say at this time that I can only list photographers who send samples periodically. I need the photos preferably in black and white, and each photo must have photographer's name and address on back of photo.

WRESTLING TIMES—Allan Sacharow; 1275 Inwood Terrace; Fort Lee, New Jersey 07024. Sample copies are 75 cents each.

Above: (upper photo) Hiro Matsuda vs. Mr. X, by Mark E. Nelson, 782 St. Anne Dr., Dunedin, Fla. 33528. (lower photo) Tony Garea, by Don Freedman.

Mike Leonard of 25 McAuleffe Drive, North Brunswick, New Jersey 08902 has two sheets of WWWF territory results for 25 cents plus a 13 cent stamp.

My brother-in-law is selling his photos again. You can write to John Sawina at 143 Golf Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey 07080. He takes excellent posed and action shots at Phillie and Hamberg TV tapings.

SOME MORE EXCELLENT PHOTOGRAPHERS: Orlando Sal Macchia—98 Glendale Street, Nutley, New Jersey 07110; Barry Benghiat—34-53 29th Street, Astoria, N.Y. 11106; Joe Cefala—127 Glenbridge Avenue, Providence, R.I. 02909; Frank Amato—80 Countisbury Avenue, North Valley Stream, N.Y. 11580; Chris Bass—3329 North Water Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19134; Scott Romer—8216 North Illinois Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46260; Terrance R. Machalak—448 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Nick Gjecaj of 1360 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11230 has over 100 magazines for sale, dating from 1973 till the present.

Darlene York of Burlington, Maine 04417 writes that she is selling photos, but I received no samples.

Why not send your 75 cents to Mr. Ken Jugan of 434 Ohio Avenue, Glassport, Pa. 15045 for his THREE RIVERS WRESTLING bulletin? Ken has been a very big help in our Ken Patera Fan Club, with results and pictures from Penna. and Ohio, getting us members, etc. Thank you, Ken, for being such a great friend.

The 1976 Fan Club of the Year was the DEAN HO FAN CLUB under the supervision of David Garofalo who resides at 13 Griswold Street, Everett, Mass. 02149. Vice President is Paul Antonelli. Issue #8 was very good.

GEOFF PORTZ FAN CLUB—Rosemary; 34 Nemy Crescent; Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA R2Y OK5. Bulletin called SPIN is excellent. Rosemary is very devoted and does an excellent job.

Gary J. Kamensack of 12265 Corbett, Detroit, Michigan 48213 is selling magazines and Detroit area programs dating from 1969 to present for $1.00 each, with discounts for those who purchase five or more. Gary also has a huge selection of quality photos available and a special Grab Bag offer. Send a 13 cent stamp for further information.

Daniel Rush of 215 Cardinal Lane, Mount Holly, N.J. 08060 is interested in obtaining articles on Chief Jay Strongbow and would also like the W.W.W.F. ratings.

Mark C. Ambrose of 27 Pembroke Avenue, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860 (age 18) is interested in hearing from fans of The Valiant Brothers, Spiros Arion, Billy White Wolff and Pete Sanchez.

Robert Klatkiewicz of 2258 South 31st, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215 wants wrestling books, newspaper clippings, ticket stubs and programs and pictures.

Steve Azzopardi of San Mateo, California writes complaining about Mike Lano of L.A. Steve, I can't help you out, as I have written to Mike also, with no answer.

I have received a lot of complaints again about Fan Clubs, photographers, etc. Most of the complaints are about fan clubs for the Valiant Brothers, Pete Sanchez, Blackjacks, Kevin Sullivan and Alan Kaminsky. I haven't heard from these people either. I did receive a bulletin from the Kevin Sullivan Fan Club, from the others—nothing. I try to be careful with listings so that things like this don't happen. Sometimes I just don't understand people.

Mike Castiglione of 28 West Dennis Lane, Coram, New York 11727 is selling Nostalgia Sheets, tape recordings of W.W.W.F. and N.W.A. interviews and bouts, press clippings, etc. Send a S.A.S.E. for lists.

Ira Green of 243 Foxhurst Road, Oceanside, New York 11572 is interested in starting a wrestling bulletin. Needs correspondents from all over the United States and Canada.

Clifford Meth of 21 Wenonah Avenue, Rockaway, New Jersey 07866 just sent me a copy of his "READY—WRESTLE" newsletter. It has ratings, photos, Wrestler of the Month, etc. It is very good. Why not drop Cliff a line or two for further information?

DON KENT FAN CLUB—Ray Baka of 759 East 200th Street, Euclid, Ohio 44119. Dues are $4.00 per year.

Tony Morais of 4425 River Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016 is interested in hearing from fans in the W.W.W.F. area, particularly upstate New York.

George Lentz of 3412 West Parnell Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53221 sent me his Result Sheet. 1976 Milwaukee Wrestling Results for only 25 cents.

HEART PUNCH is the name of the bulletin for the OX BAKER FAN CLUB. I just received my issue from Ann Dachtler, President. Her address is 4122 North Melvina Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634.

PEDRO MORALES FAN CLUB—Doug McLeer, President; 24 Charles Street; New Rochelle, New York 10801. Haven't heard from you in a while. Hope nothing is wrong.

THE WRESTLING REPORTER—John Veneziano of 705 Tenth Street, Riverton, New Jersey 08077. $2.50 per year.

BOB ARMSTRONG FAN CLUB—Jim Canette; 12800 Urton Lane; Middletown, Kentucky 40243. Yearly dues are $3.00, for which you will receive 8x10 photo, membership card, clipping sheets and four bulletins.

Doug Farley of 39 Cheyenne Cresc. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2L 0Z3 is selling his wrestling magazines for 50 cents each and he will pay postage. Send him 25 cents for his list, as the American stamp cannot be used on mail sent from Canada.

Ray Malosiecki of 3263 Almond Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19134 has programs for sale from Texas, Florida, Georgia, California, New Jersey, New York, Detroit. When writing to him, tell him Georgie sent ya.

GLOBAL WRESTLING ENTERPRISES—Tom Burke; 31 Groveland Street; Springfield, Mass. 01108. Tom tells me he is putting out a 1977 newsletter information sheet for free. All that is needed is S.A.S.E.

Larry Lamphere of 30-09 88th Street, Jackson Heights, New York 11369 would like to hear from fans from the N.W.A. area. He is also interested in buying programs from all over.

INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING put out by Ricky Rabinowitz of 51 East Rogues Path, Huntington Station, New York 11746. This publication is really fantastic. Why not drop us a line or two? You won't be sorry.

Last but not least, is the WIDE WORLD OF WRESTLING Radio Station, 105.9 on FM radio. Under the guidance of Skipper Dave Davis, Jimmy Mack and the unforgettable Jay Rosen. Producer Lou Edwards is looking for sponsors. $25.00 for one minute, $20.00 for 30 seconds. Now the show is on two nights a week. See your local listing for times.

Can't forget Jeff Lynch of 649 Racine Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15216. He is interested in obtaining programs from all over the United States.

Gary P. Cubeta of 78 Crystal Lake Road, Middletown, Conn. 06457 has tape cassettes for sale. Drop him a s.a.s.e. for details.

W.F.I.A. WRESTLING CONVENTION to be held August 7, 8 and 9, 1977 at Dallas, Texas. For further information, please write to Diane Devine, P.O. Box 1902, Bechtold Station, St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

Well, that's about it for now. See you in my next column. Till then, keep supporting the greatest sport in the world—WRESTLING.

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Nasty Jack

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A TRIBUTE TO ANTONINO ROCCA

The wrestling world mourns the passing of Antonino "Argentina" Rocca, the barefoot king of wrestling who died in March of this year. There will never be another like him.

BY FRANK AMATO

Antonino "Argentina" Rocca during his heyday as the darling of wrestling. Though he never became world champion, he was called "The Uncrowned Champion."

There are legends in wrestling both in the past and in the present. The list keeps growing and growing. One wrestler who truly deserves to be called a legend is the great Antonino "Argentina" Rocca. To this reporter's regret, this tribute must come at a sad time as Tony Rocca has passed on.

The barefoot king of wrestling, who along with the late great Gorgeous George turned professional wrestling into the most popular sport around, died after a brief illness on March 15, 1977 at Roosevelt Hospital in New York City. A very important chapter in wrestling was written by him.

There never has been a wrestler quite like Antonino Rocca. Other wrestlers have copied his style but none has ever captured his popularity or his greatness. He was the master. When Tony first came to this country of America and burst upon the wrestling scene wrestling without shoes, it was most unorthodox.

He quickly captured the imagination of the wrestling fans. They were thrilled with his perpetual motion. His amazing flying dropkicks. The way he would slap the face of an opponent with his feet. He made the Backbreaker famous with his own Argentina Backbreaker. No wrestler ever escaped this hold.

Antonino Rocca was born in Trevisa, Italy on April 13, 1927. When Tony was 15, his family moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina. A big sport in Argentina was rugby and Tony excelled at it. Tony had a degree in electrical engineering from Rosario University in Argentina. It was former great mat star Kola Kwariani who introduced wrestling to Tony and sent for him in 1947 to appear in America. History was about to be made.

Antonino Rocca made one million dollars in his illustrious wrestling career. During his peak he was earning one hundred thousand dollars a year. It was once reported that he had a string of one thousand straight victories. Although Tony never became world champion, he was referred to

Antonino Rocca with Vince McMahon doing the color commentary for the WWWF TV matches

Above: Antonino Rocca and Vince McMahon interviewing Andre the Giant and Chief Jay Strongbow at Madison Square Garden

Above: Antonino Rocca poses with just one of his many mat fans

as "The Uncrowned Champion." So popular was Tony Rocca that he never really needed the title. To the fans, he *was* the champion.

Not that Tony never wrestled for the World Championship. He did. Tony tried to wrest the title from Lou Thesz; Yvon Robert and Buddy Rogers. Tony held many titles but there was one he was most proud of. He and Miguel Perez held the World Tag Team Championship from 1957 to 1961. They never lost the title but relinquished it when Perez decided to go it alone.

Tony Rocca had many great matches that stand out in this reporter's mind. Such as his matches with Buddy Rodgers; Gene "Mr. America" Stanlee; Dr. Jerry and Eddie Graham; The Fabulous Kangaroos; Hans Schmidt; Karl Von Hess; Dick the Bruiser; Killer Kowalski and Verne Gagne. And there are more, but space prevents the listing.

Tony Rocca became world famous with the invention of television. As television grew, so did the popularity of Tony. He became TV's Mr. Wrestling. He sold more TV sets than anyone except comedian Milton Berle. Tony Rocca could do no wrong by his fans who numbered in the millions. So popular was Tony that he could start a riot or stop one with one wave of his arm. In many matches Tony was carried from the ring atop the shoulders of his fans. He was adored, and he deserved it.

Although Tony retired from active wrestling in 1967, he still donned the trunks for charity. In recent months, Tony still wrestled in Puerto Rico along with Miguel Perez. The past few years Tony was a color commentator along with Vince McMahon Jr. for the World Wide Wrestling Federation. His famous line was, "I will take my shoes off and enjoy the matches."

Antonino "Argentina" Rocca is gone. Wrestling will miss him. The wrestling fans will miss him. He was loved, adored. He is gone but will never be forgotten. Good-bye, Tony. You were the meaning of LEGEND.

Ken Patera Vows: "I'll Be The Next Living Legend of Wrestling!"

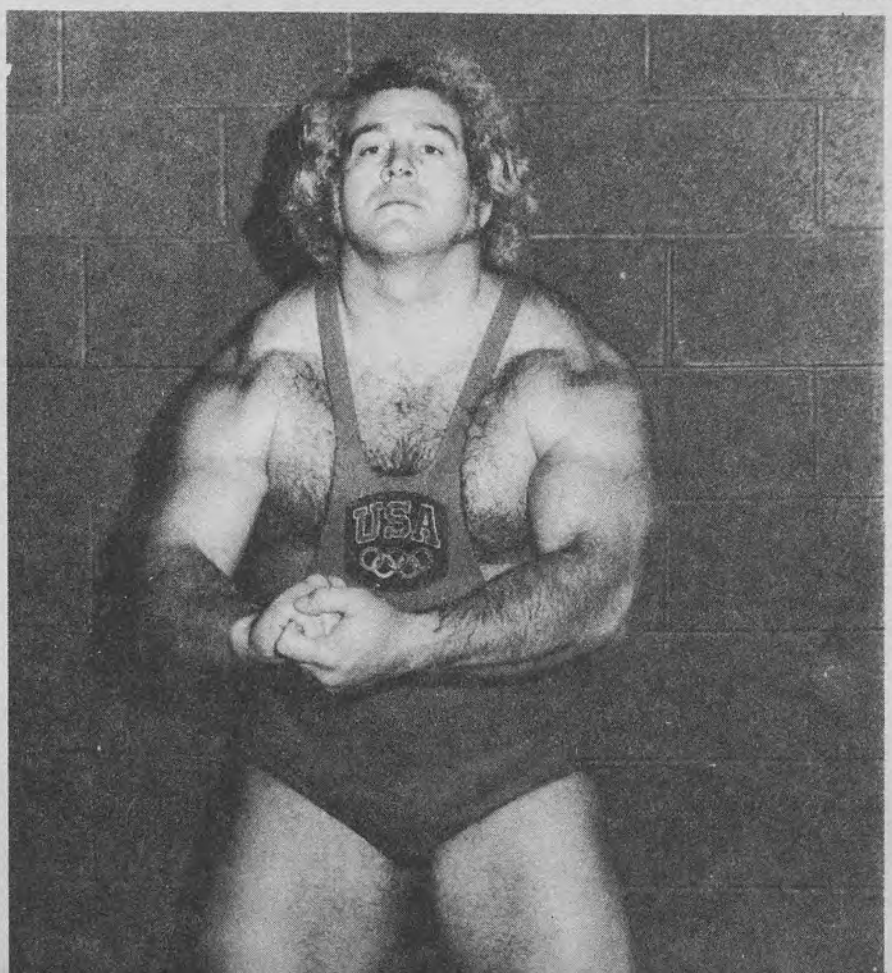
A bronze medalist in weightlifting in the 1972 Olympics, Ken Patera may well be the strongest wrestler in the U.S.A. And now that he has five years of experience in the ring, he claims that he will soon be recognized as the premier wrestler in this country.

BY FRANK AMATO

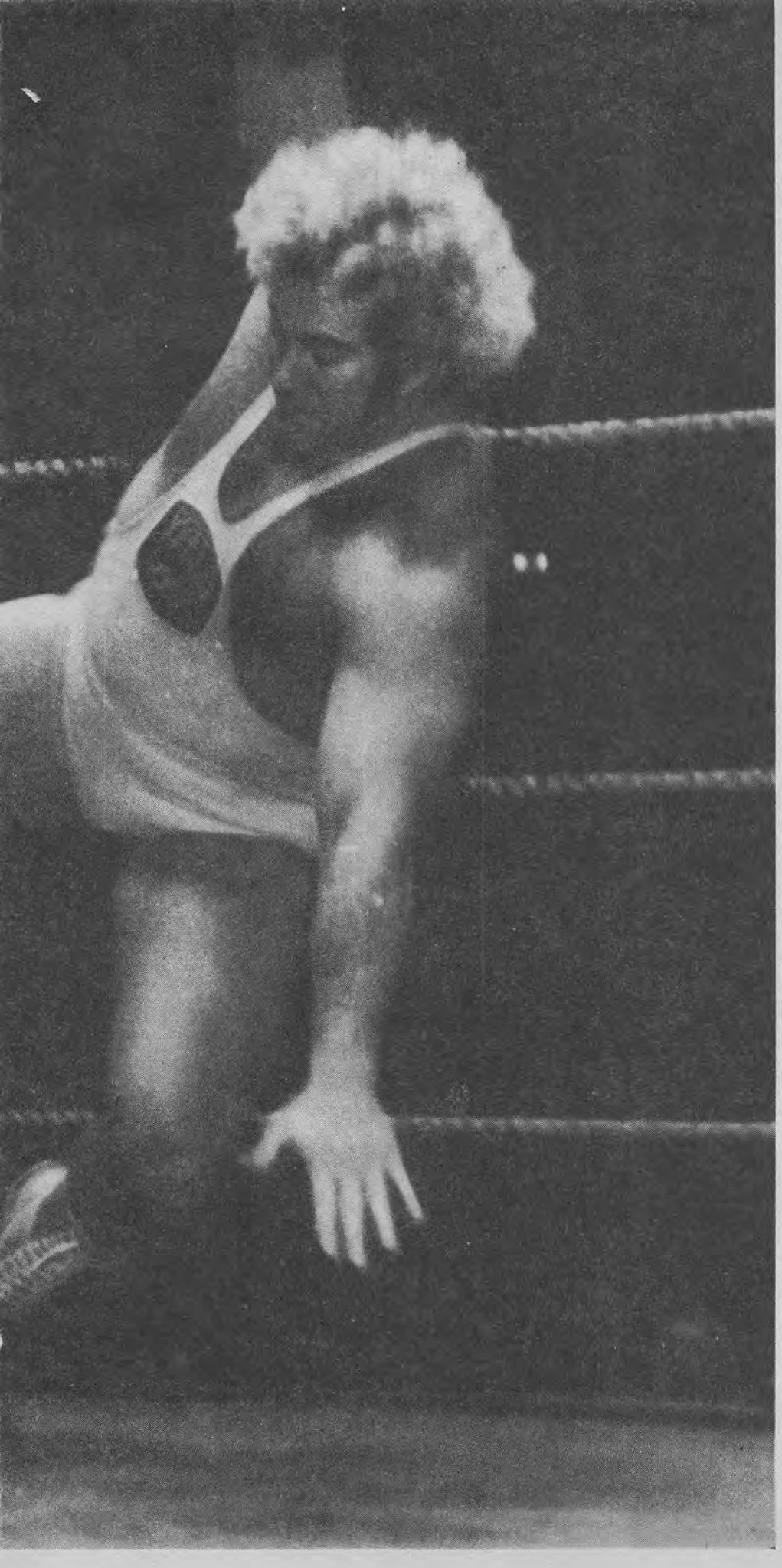
He calls himself the strongest human in America. He can call himself that, because it is true. He proved it by winning a bronze medal in the 1972 Olympics. His name is Ken Patera.

Patera now claims to be the strongest man in all of professional wrestling. But, is he? He has some rivals for that position—namely, Bruno Sammartino; Ivan Putski; Mighty Igor and Superstar Billy Graham. They are also noted for their superior strength.

Ken shakes his head, "No way. No way can these wrestlers even *think* they are stronger! I've proven myself in the Olympics in front of millions. I have a medal to prove it. I proved it from 1968 when I first entered contests by winning the Pan American games. I returned in 1969 to repeat



Left: A stunned Ken Patera takes a breather after being Dropkicked by an opponent. Below: Patera comes down with a vicious Kneedrop across the neck of Bruno Sammartino.



that conquest. Also in 1970, 1971 and 1972. Can those others claim this in their career? I've been filmed holding back a truck by bracing myself against a wall and placing my feet against the bumper. This truck gunned its motor and never budged an inch. Can these others claim that?"

Patera says he is much stronger than Superstar Billy Graham: "I've bested Graham in feats of strength by out-lifting barbells well over 500 pounds, in Texas and Minnesota and Wisconsin. He never beat me once. He can brag all he wants, but he knows the truth."

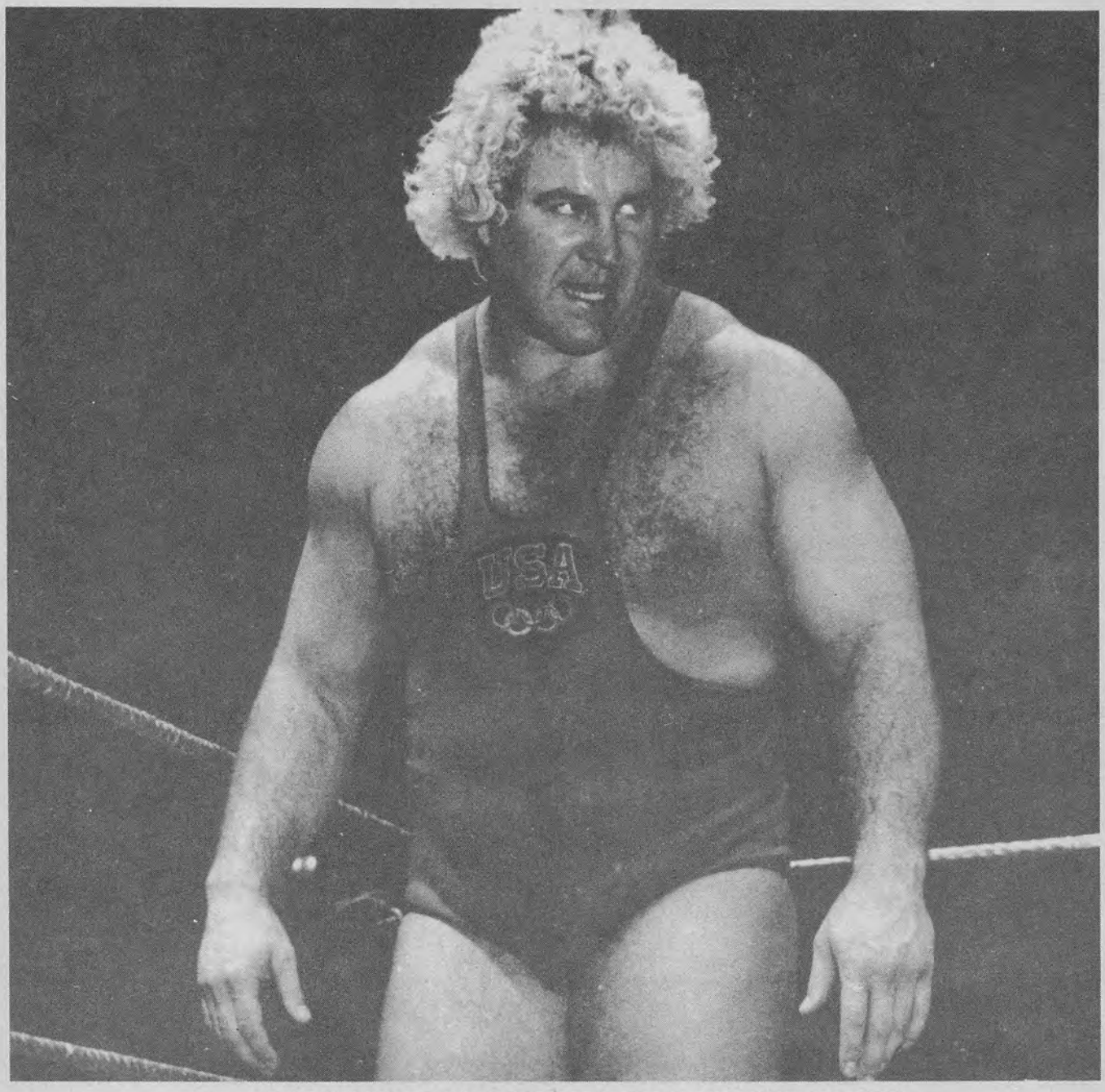
What about Bruno Sammartino, Ivan Putski and Mighty Igor? Haven't they proven how strong they are? "Not to me they haven't," boasts Patera. "Let them meet me in the ring lifting weights or arm wrestling or whatever they can think of. I'm open to any kind of contest against them. I don't have to prove myself ever again, but they do. I don't deny they are strong. I admit that. But I deny they are stronger than Ken Patera."

Currently Ken Patera is campaigning in the WWWF to capture the coveted WWWF World Heavyweight Championship from Bruno Sammartino. Ken feels he has the right style, strength, experience to defeat the great legend. Captain Lou Albano who manages Ken Patera thinks he has the next WWWF champion.

Comments Albano, "I've never been so excited about a wrestler since I first managed Ivan Koloff. I see in Kenny Patera the same greatness that I saw in Koloff. I knew I could make Koloff the WWWF champion and I did. Now I see the same thing in Patera. He has it all. Strength, ability, knowledge and that inner drive that I call HUNGER! Ken Patera has this hunger written all over. I've molded this human superstrength machine into a great, superior wrestler. Here is a man who doesn't *think* he can defeat Sammartino, he *knows* he can. Even Sammartino knows Patera can defeat him."

Ken Patera claims, "Sammartino hasn't shown me much at all. He has shown me he can wrestle. Yet I've out-wrestled him. He has shown me his great strength but I have shown I'm stronger. I believe I move very fast in that ring. Sammartino has shown me he is faster by running from me in that ring. He belongs in the Olympics as a long distance runner. Not as a wrestler. Come on, Sammartino, stay put and wrestle like a man. Wrestle me like a champion is supposed to. Your fans deserve that much."

Verne Gagne, the former holder of the AWA Heavyweight Championship, thinks Ken Patera can defeat

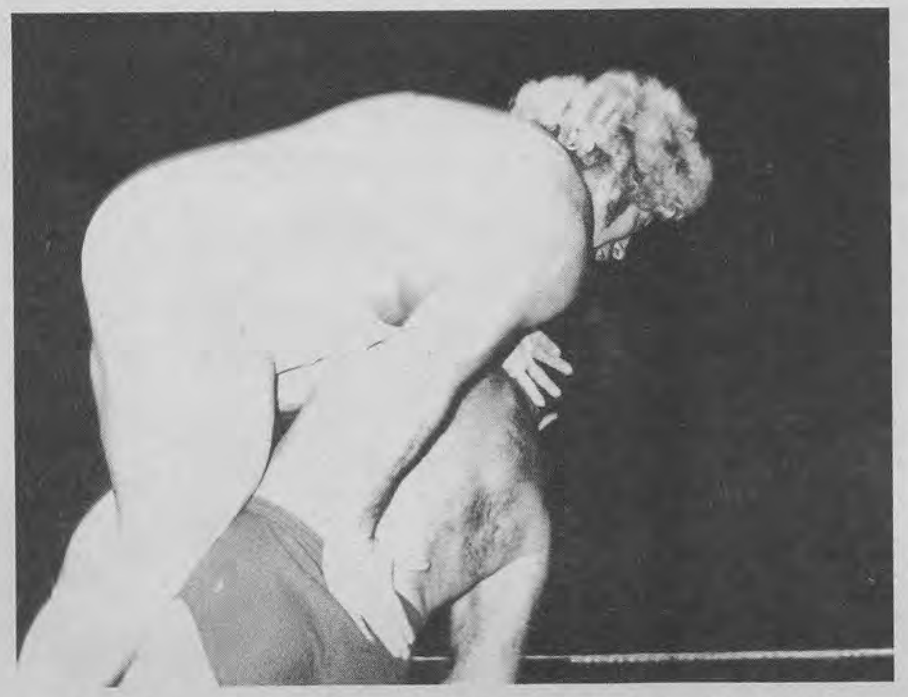


Above: Ken Patera looks his menacing best as he gets set for another bout.

Ken Patera with Captain Lou Albano, left, under whose management he has changed from a hero to a villain.

Using his elbow, Patera catches Bruno Sammartino in the throat.

Patera's face tells the story as he holds his back after tasting a vicious Bodyslam.



Above: Patera uses a Flying Bodyblock to great advantage on an opponent.

Bruno Sammartino or any wrestler around. "When I saw Ken Patera in those 1972 Olympics, I saw raw talent that could be molded into a great wrestler. I signed Ken to a contract to help train him for the ring wars. I slimmed him down from the 300 pounds he was to his current 285 solid-muscled torso. I honed all the rough edges into a fine wrestler. I felt it only a matter of time until his strength and wrestling ability came together and any title would be his. I have only one regret—that Patera took the path of a rule breaker to gain this goal. I blame Albano for taking this fine young man and filling his head with visions of glory and leaving a trail of broken bodies. The Ken Patera I helped train is not the same Patera today. Bruno Sammartino had better watch his step. I know what Ken Patera can do."

Ken Patera has come a long way from his very first pro match in 1972. Then he was a green rookie, with just his strength to ward off the onslaught of experienced ring generals. With the help of Verne Gagne, those first matches were victories. Then came the bigger mat stars like Baron Fritz Von Raschke; Larry Hennig; Ray Stevens; Nick Bockwinkle; Blackjack Lanza and Superstar Billy Graham. There were victories against these men, but there were defeats.

Ken Patera says of those early times, "I expected to lose some matches. After all, these men were seasoned wrestlers with great reputations. Losing a match to them wouldn't be the worst thing to happen. Still, I beat them at times. The only thing that I didn't like was the way they wrestled. They used tricks on me [that] I never knew existed. Still, I learned and gave back the same. I hated this, but to survive I made myself an animal like them."

"The only regret I had was Verne Gagne promising me a title shot against him if I worked myself into contention. When I did, he put me off by claiming I needed more experience. I was a beginner so I withdrew my challenge. Now, I know Gagne was simply scared of me. I hope that someday I'll get my chance to pay him back by beating him."

The next three years Ken Patera learned his craft well. He rose from early prelim matches to top matches with top purses. He followed the rules and made money, but no title match came his way. Patera notes, "I left the AWA with a fine reputation, money and experience. Then I went down south where again I faced the best and beat them. I still followed the rules. Only now, the blood—my blood—started to flow. True, I bled in

Continued on page 62

Is Somebody Trying To

It seems that someone doesn't like The Grand Wizard. One of wrestling's top managers, The Wizard has survived bomb plots, bricks, razored eggs, and a very suspicious highway accident.

BY ERNIE SALVATORE

Few outside of big time wrestling's inner sanctums know his real name.

Fewer inside or out know where he lives.

He's a man on the move, complex, difficult to describe. Mysterious, gregarious, malevolent, sly, deceptive—all are appropriate adjectives.

His working name is The Grand Wizard.

His job is managing a string of successful, world class wrestlers.

His modus operandi: psyching opponents and spectators to the advantage of his charges.

Easily recognizable on ringside aprons dressed in garish headpieces and capes, he melts into crowds as quickly as snow on a hot griddle.

He has to. His is dangerous work. Few realize the guts it takes to go out in front of 20,000 hyped up fans, to get 19,999 raging against you, and to make it out of there in one piece.

The Grand Wizard is no stranger to danger.

"We are," he says, "well acquainted with each other."

He's escaped bomb plots, open-bladed knives, hat pins, bricks, razored eggs (once over lightly), and a highway accident he's convinced was no accident.

For evidence, he has a back brace and three crushed vertebrae.

"It made me miss a Madison Square Garden main event for the first time in my life," he said.

It could've been his last, too.

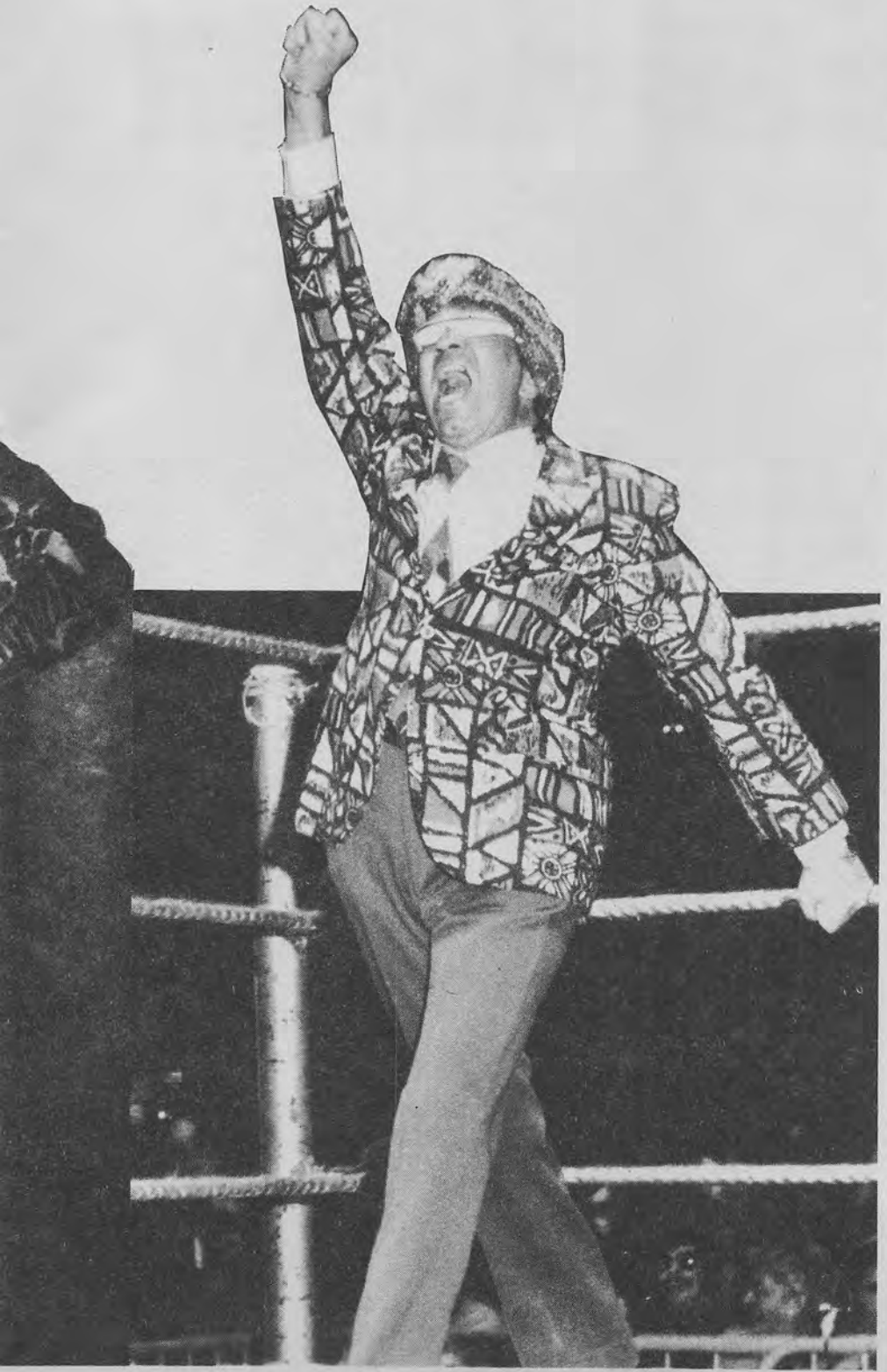
He picked a good match to miss. His man, Stan Stasiak, upset Bruno Sammartino that night. But, Bruno kept his World Wide championship belt, thanks to wrestling rules that declare a champion can only lose his title inside of the ring by a pin or supression.

Stasiak, the 300-pound former lumberjack from Buzzard Creek, Oregon, threw Sammartino out of the ring. Dazed, shaken, Bruno couldn't scramble back in time.

"Damned coward, that's what he is," said The Wizard. "Stasiak would've whipped him if he'd gotten back in."

At about the same time the shocked crowd of 20,000 saw Sammartino stumble towards the exits,

KILL THE GRAND WIZARD ?



Connecticut State Police were finding a wrecked car in a gully on the Merritt Parkway below a severed guard rail.

Inside it lay the Grand Wizard, half bent over the back of his seat. Still unconscious, he was barely breathing. His personal chauffeur was found jammed into the trunk compartment, the steering wheel on his chest.

Like The Wizard, he survived, too.

"I'm coming down from Boston," The Wizard said. "We worked a card there in the Garden, took a couple of days off, then headed for New York. I had Stasiak against Sammartino. I knew my man was the better man. I knew when it was over Stasiak and me would own the belt."

Suddenly, out of the night, a low-slung, high-performance sports car shot past The Wizard's.

"We gave him plenty of room," he said. "We figured the guy had an important meeting to go to."

Then, without warning, the sports car swerved in sharply.

"My driver has to turn the same way," The Wizard said. "That puts us into a spin. We hit the rail and I feel my back wrapping around my seat. I knew it was going to break. I screamed."

He winced at the memory.

"I been in tough spots," he said. "None like this. I went out like a light. Woke up in the hospital. Missed the damned main event."

Doctors mended his crushed back. The prescribed brace eases the pain, somewhat. Not completely, however.

"They told me to take six months off," he said. "How can I take six months off? My men got to eat. I got to eat."

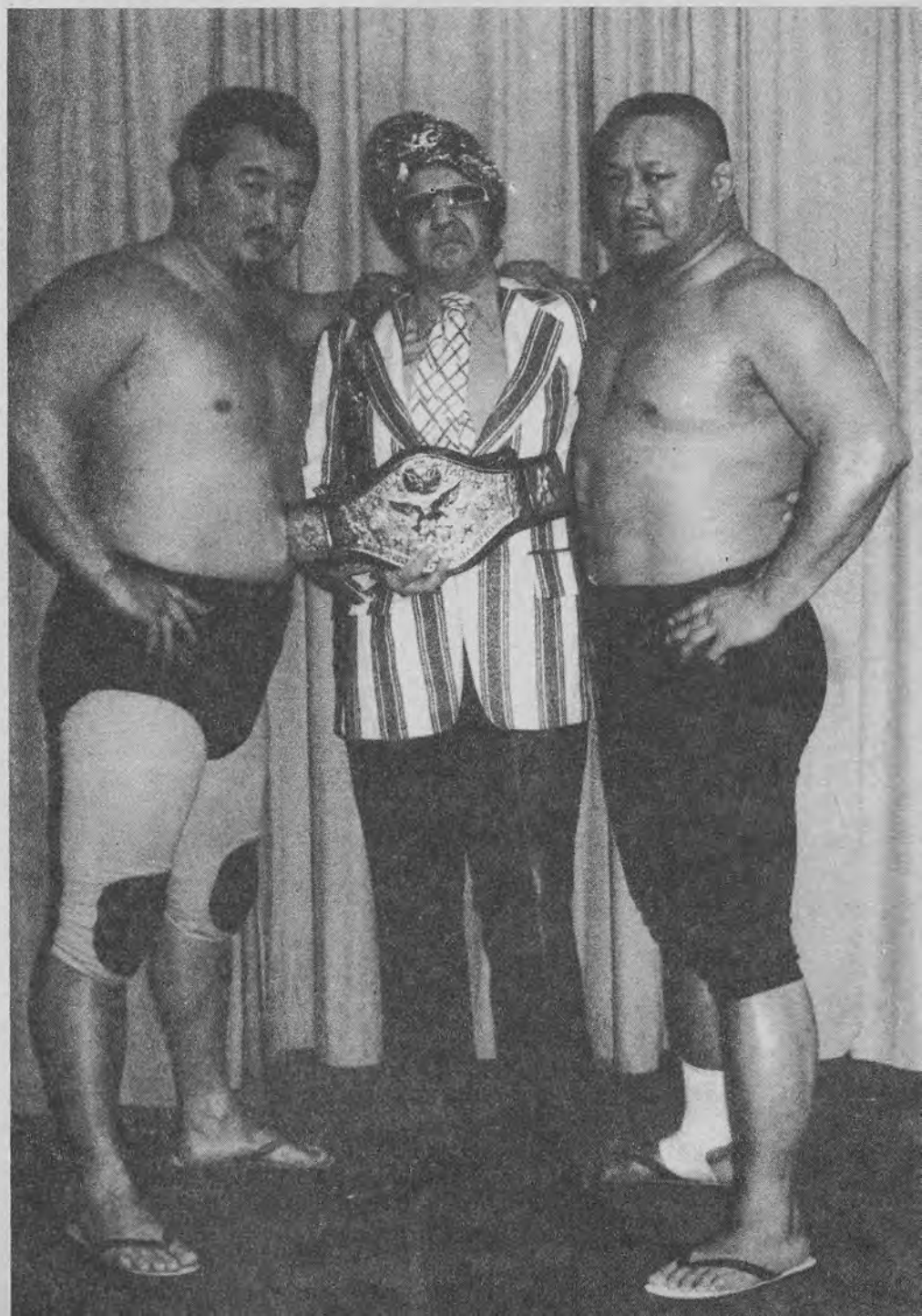
He returned to work in three weeks.

"That car deliberately turned in on us," The Wizard said. "Someone was out to get us. Too many funny things keep happening to me in Boston. Like the night I've got Tanaka against Black Jack Mulligan."

What a night. The Wizard's Japanese champion and Mulligan threw out the rule book and staged a two-man riot. A spectator, obviously a Tanaka admirer, somehow had gotten into the ring unnoticed to lend a little help.

Above: The Wizard has managed many famous wrestlers, including: (left) Dr. Jerry Graham and (right) George Steele.

Right: The Grand Wizard stands proudly with Professor Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji whom he managed to two WWWF World Tag Team Championships.



"I'm on the other side in our corner," The Wizard said, "when I see him. It's too late."

Too late to stop him from drawing a knife.

"He dives right at Mulligan and slashes him," said The Wizard. "Worst cut I ever see, right from the groin all the way down the inside of the leg to the ankle.

"Mulligan goes down like he's shot. Tanaka goes after the guy with the knife. The guy has a buddy in the ring by now and they're both working on Tanaka. Finally, the cops came."

While the police restored order, The Wizard went over to Mulligan who was still lying on the floor.

"I've never been one of Mulligan's admirers," said The Wizard, "but, I got to say the man has guts. When I bend over him, he sees me and he says, 'I'm bleeding and it's bad. Help me out of here. I'm not going to let them carry me out.' "

The Wizard, Tanaka and the ref complied. They righted Mulligan who climbed through the ropes unaided and walked to his dressing room. There he collapsed and was rushed to the hospital.

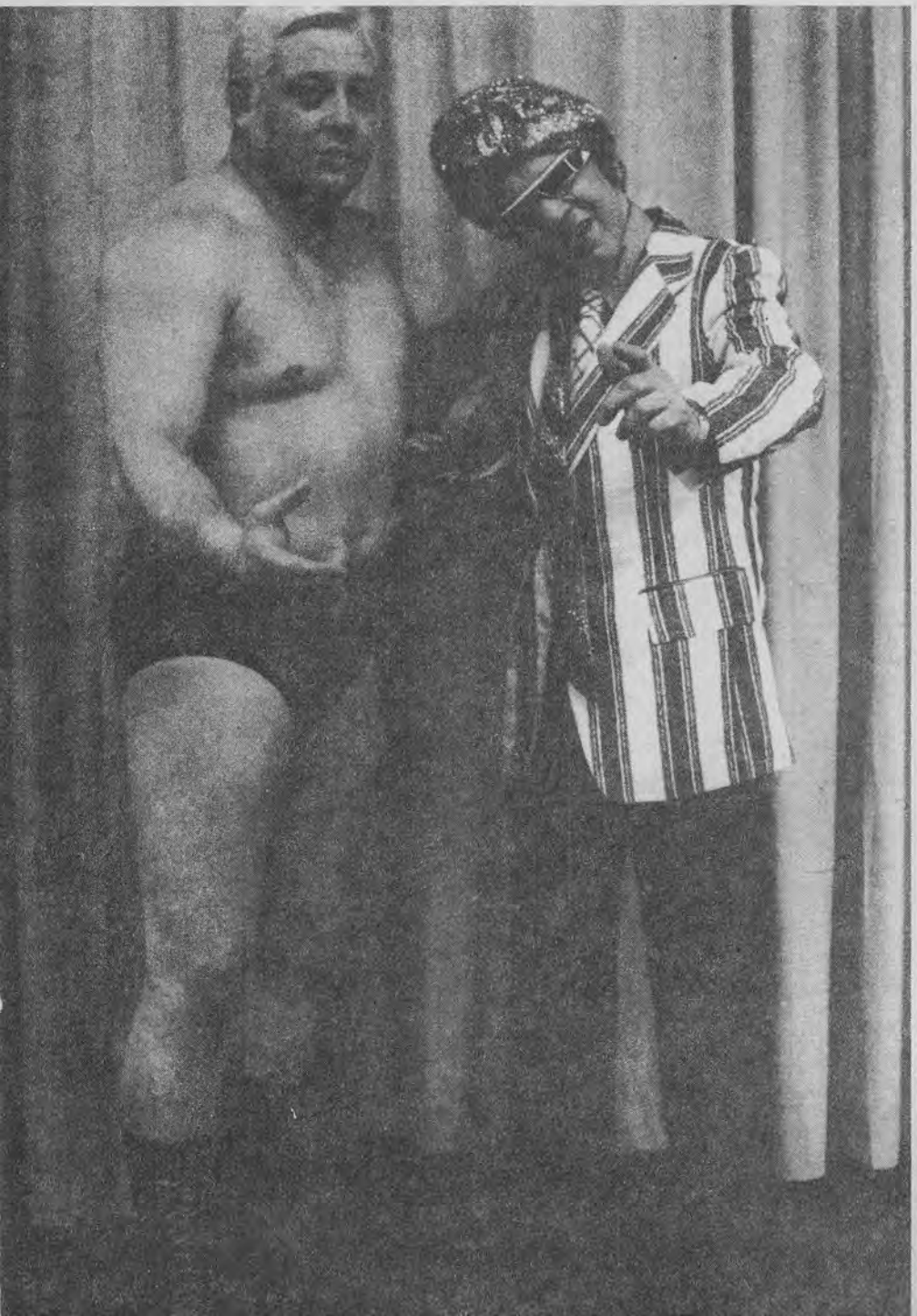
"But, the bum was back in six months meaner than ever," said The Wizard.

A few months later, another "Boston incident" occurred.

"I'm eating breakfast the morning after a card," The Wizard said, "when I find myself spitting blood."

The breakfast featured eggs sautéd with razor shavings.

"Another time I'm in Bangor, Me., with Fuji and Tanaka," he said. "After



Above: (right) The Grand Wizard always travels in style in his Lincoln Continental, with his personal chauffeur. (left) The Grand Wizard listens for a change as his protégé, Cowboy Bob Duncum, speaks.

Left: The Grand Wizard with Ray Stevens. Stevens was the very first wrestler managed by The Wizard.

the show we go to a seafood place. We order lobster. I guess I should've specified I wanted it under glass, not with glass."

Such are the penalties of being a wrestling character.

"Makes life interesting," he said. "You never know who you can trust. Not even little old ladies. They're the worst."

One blocked his and Stasiak's entrance to their dressing room in Cobo Hall, Detroit.

"We're both relaxed and breathing easier," said The Wizard. "We'd been in another toughie and the fans were throwing things. By now we're laughing as we move towards the door. I don't even see the dame."

She must have been in her late 60's. Small. White haired. Wearing tennis shoes, too.

"She steps right in front of us and swings her pocketbook at ME," said The Wizard.

A brick inside flattened the Wizard for over an hour.

His worst experience occurred in Cincinnati six years ago where he had The Sheik in a main event.

"While we were inside, two guys planted a bomb in The Sheik's car," The Wizard said. "They'd been spotted by a couple of young kids who were standing around outside trying to get in. The kids asked the ticket sellers what two men would be doing lifting the hood of a parked car after they got out of one of their own. The ticket sellers asked which car, and when the kids told them, they called the cops fast."

Continued on page 64

THE ALASKAN MUST BE STOPPED BEFORE HE KILLS AGAIN!

BY G.J. ROWELL

Right: Mike "The Alaskan" York uses a rope to choke The Mighty Zuma.

Hailing from Point Barrow, Alaska, at 32 years of age, 6'3" in height and 275 lbs. in weight, Mike "The Alaskan" York is truly a professional wrestler to be feared. He is as brutal and ruthless as they come.

I had the opportunity to interview this well-muscled brawler in Charlotte, North Carolina, shortly after a victim of his brutal battering died from injuries suffered at the hands of this former lumberjack. Popular Alex Medina succumbed to the injuries less than two days after being hospitalized.

POPULAR WRESTLING: Mike, young Alex Medina died shortly after losing a match to you. Where did this bout take place?

THE ALASKAN: I wrestled Alex Medina in Roanoke, Virginia in a singles match. It was on a Saturday night and he died Monday afternoon from, I believe the doctors called it, severe brain damage and they blamed it on my logging boots.

POPULAR WRESTLING: Do you have any comments on your logging boots causing the fatal damage?

THE ALASKAN: If he wasn't tough enough to take it, then he didn't belong in that ring, did he?

POPULAR WRESTLING: Many people are saying that you *deliberately* went out to kill somebody to make a name for yourself.

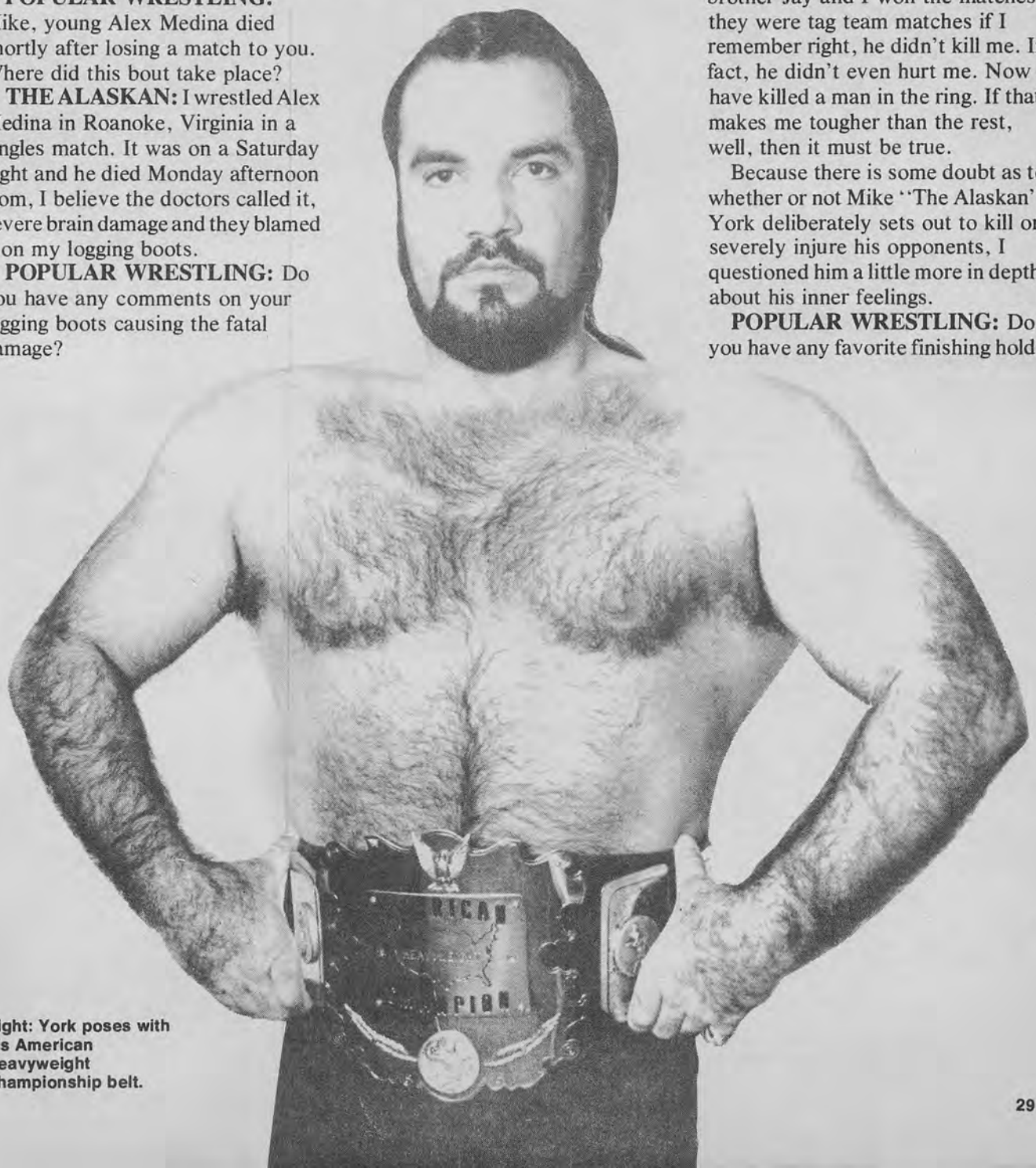
THE ALASKAN: No, I'd hardly say that. I don't really try to kill anybody. I mean, I don't feel bad about what happened. It doesn't bother me. I haven't lost a single night's sleep over it. But, I didn't try to kill him. I just tried to beat him—which I did.

POPULAR WRESTLING: Freddie Blassie always bragged about how he wanted to kill a man in the ring, so that people would really acknowledge the fact that he was superior over everyone else. I know that you wrestled against Blassie on several occasions in Los Angeles. Did he have any effect on your bout with Alex Medina?

THE ALASKAN: No, I can't say that he did. If killing a man in the ring was his dream, then he sure didn't succeed. Especially if the man he wanted to kill was me. Because, I think, as you remember when my brother Jay and I won the matches, they were tag team matches if I remember right, he didn't kill me. In fact, he didn't even hurt me. Now I have killed a man in the ring. If that makes me tougher than the rest, well, then it must be true.

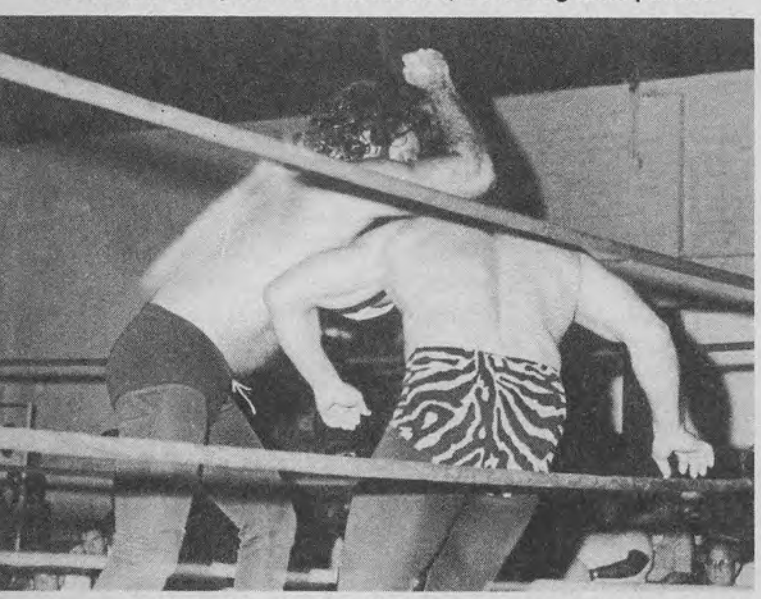
Because there is some doubt as to whether or not Mike "The Alaskan" York deliberately sets out to kill or severely injure his opponents, I questioned him a little more in depth about his inner feelings.

POPULAR WRESTLING: Do you have any favorite finishing hold?



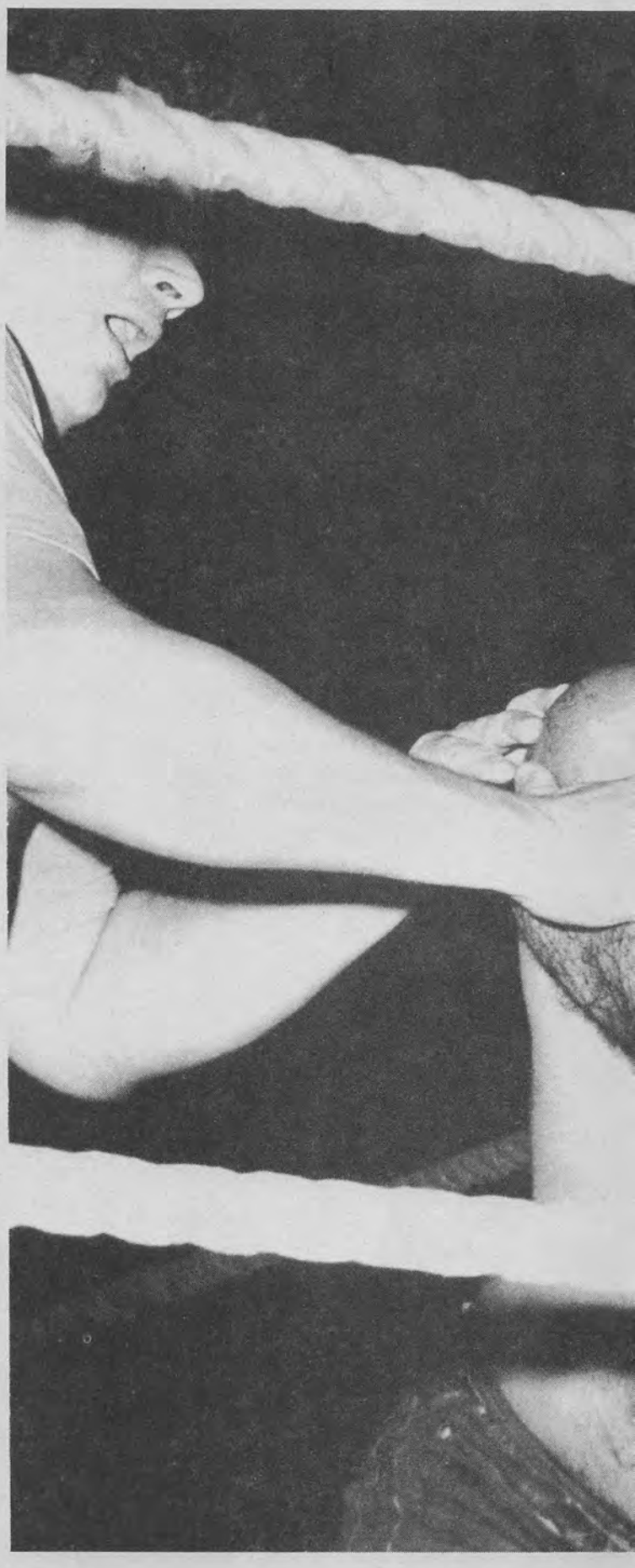
Right: York poses with his American Heavyweight Championship belt.

Mike "The Alaskan" York punches Scott Casey in an attempt to break a hold that Casey has on Frank Monte, York's tag team partner.

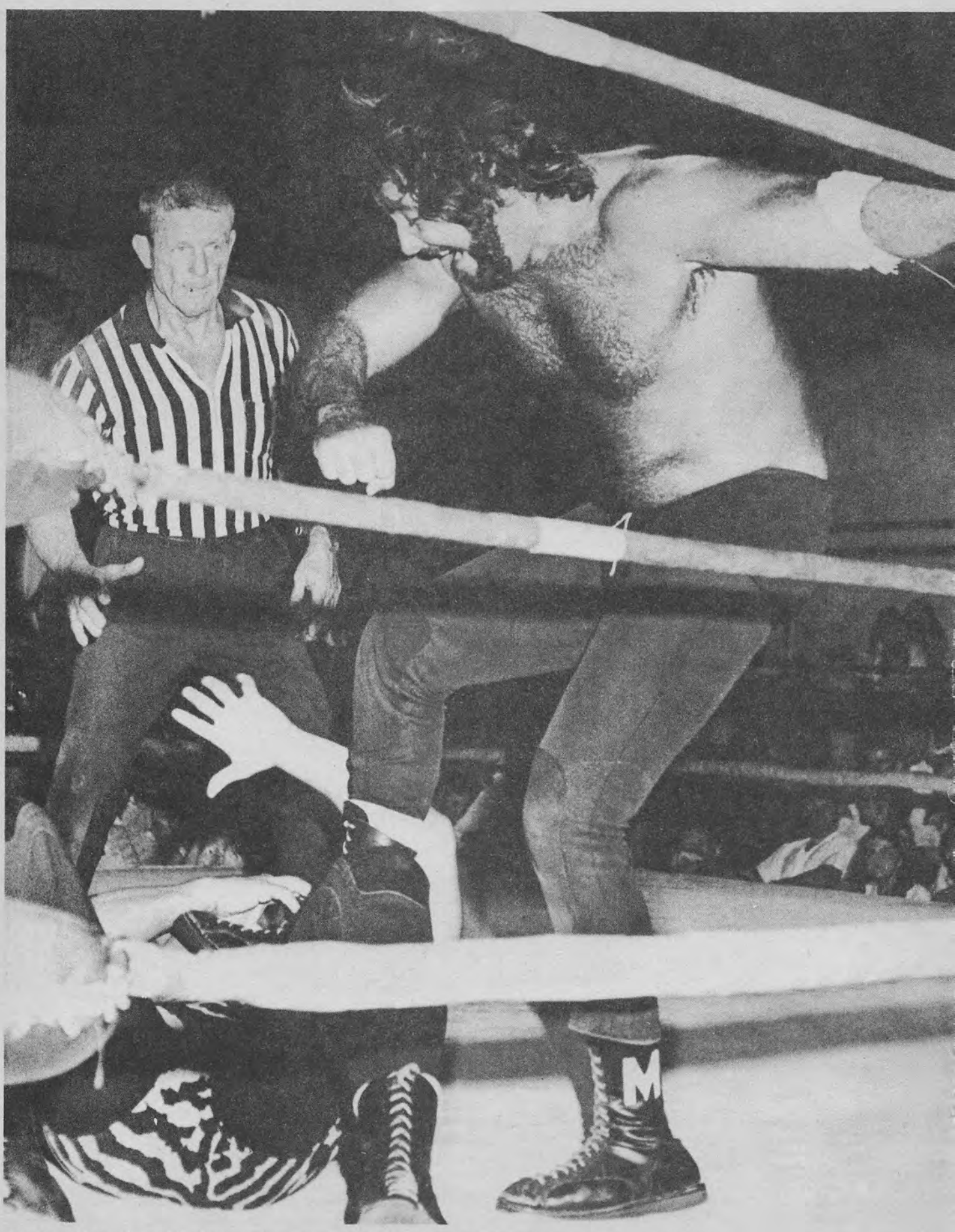


Above: The Alaskan hits wrestling great Mil Mascaras with an elbow smash.

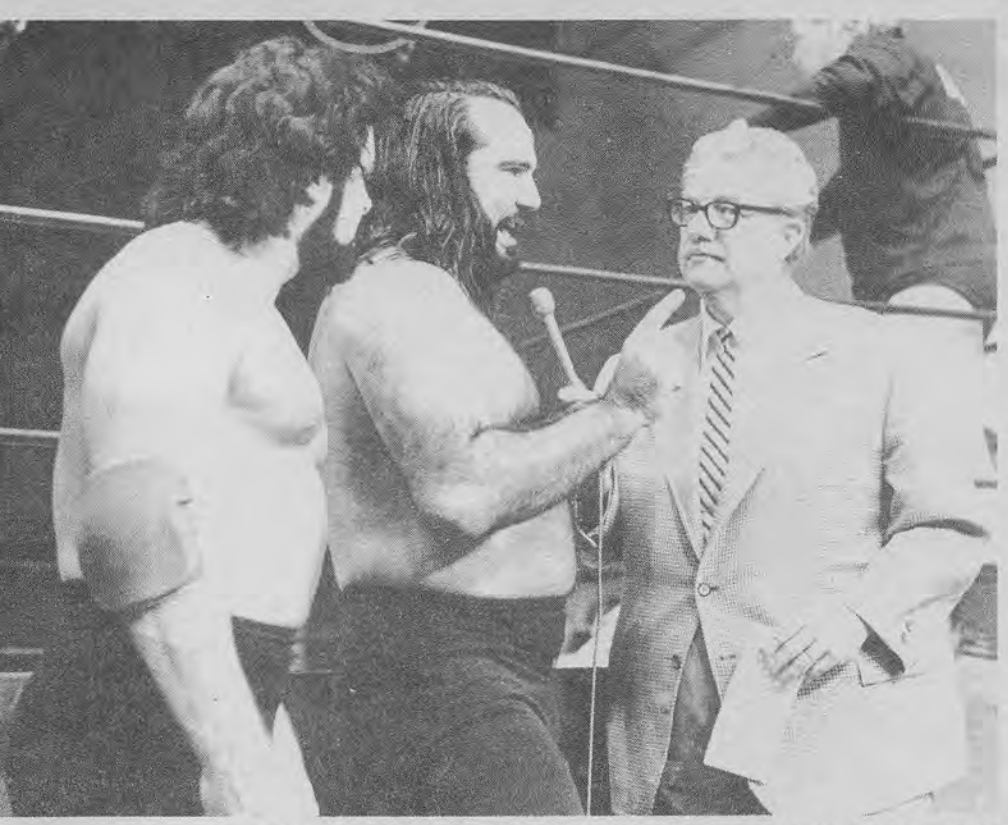
Above: The unfeeling Mike York stomps his helpless opponent senseless, without any sense of remorse.



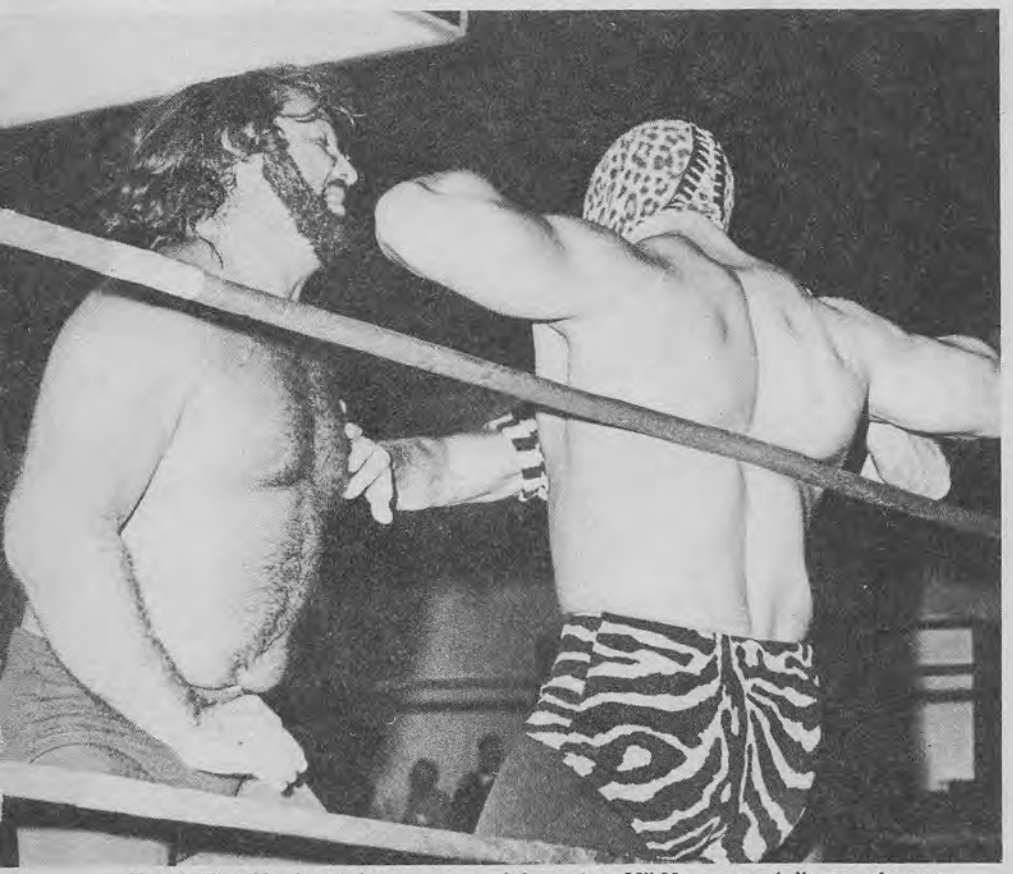
Above: Mike York chokes Mad Dog Vachon, the Grand Wrestling circuit Heavyweight Champion, while the referee gives a warning.



Chortling with joy, Mike "The Alaskan" York stomps on Mil Mascaras. Mascaras is an arch enemy of York's.



Above: Tag team partners Frank Monte, left, and Mike York, center, are interviewed by announcer Bill Ward.



Above: The Alaskan takes some punishment as Mil Mascaras delivers a forearm smash.

Right: Mike "The Alaskan" York strikes a pose for photographers and reporters. Note the metal-studded glove.

THE ALASKAN: The main hold that I prefer—I like to use the most—is just a good boot to the head. Just let me put those big lumberjack boots in on the head or the stomach and that will put away most of these inferior wrestlers that you have around here in the United States and Canada.

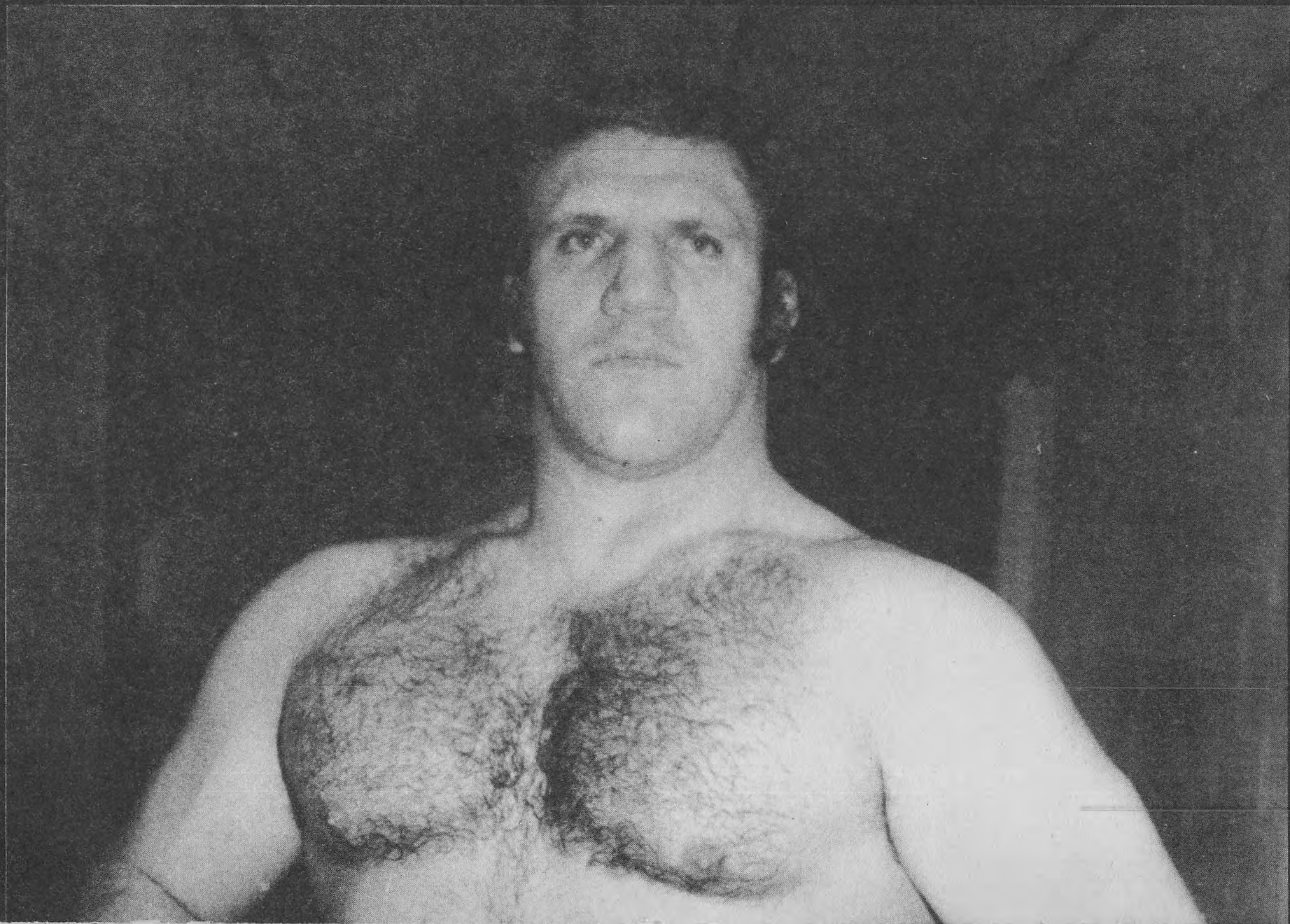
POPULAR WRESTLING: What do you think of bloody matches?

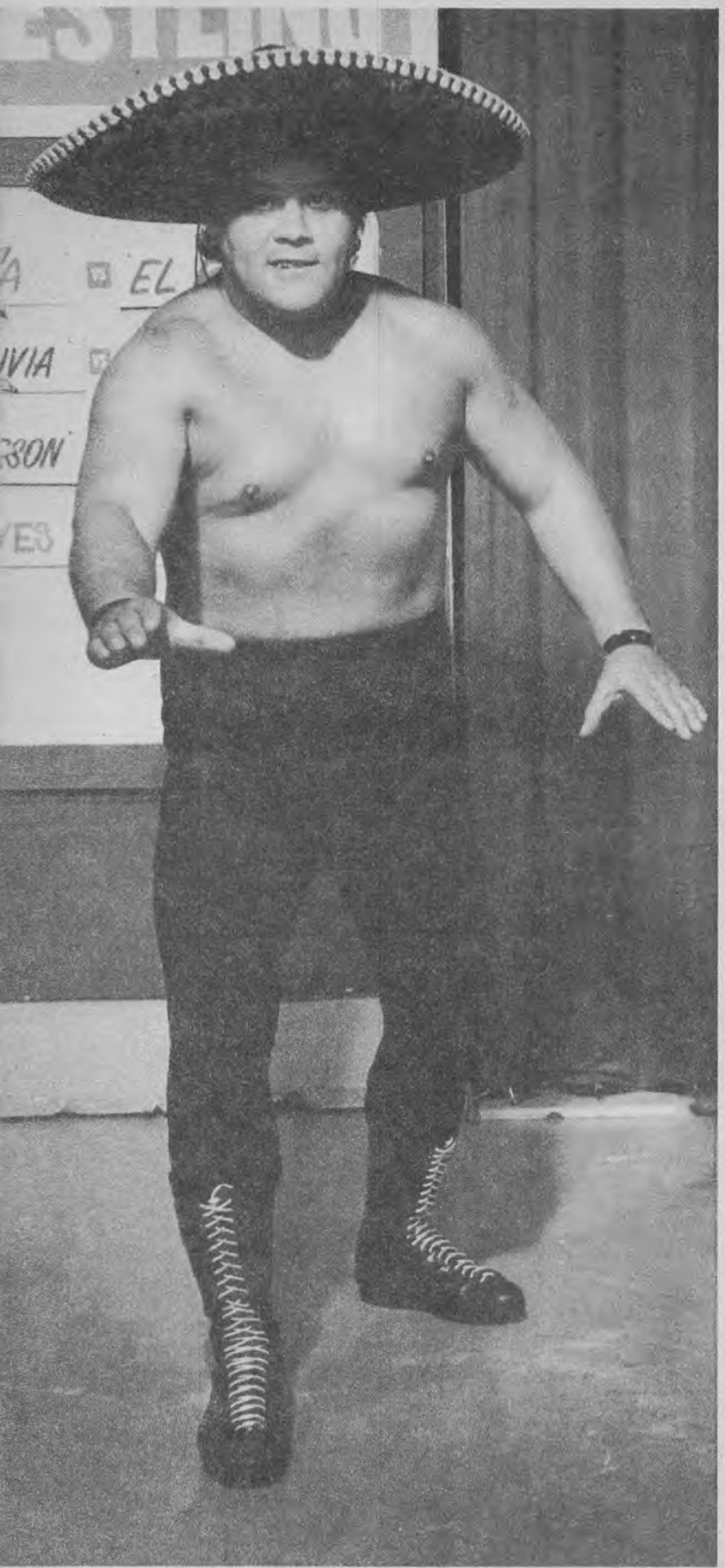
THE ALASKAN: Just look at these scars on my head! That doesn't bother me! I LOVE it! The more I bleed, the madder I get! The more I see my opponents bleed, the happier I get and the more I try to make them bleed!

The fact that Mike "The Alaskan" York is a dangerous wrestler cannot be denied. In fact, another incident came to light recently, that tended to prove that York is basically sadistic and brutal by nature. York was found guilty of assaulting an off-duty police officer and as a result he spent some time in jail! York was originally charged after a 2:30 a.m. brawl in a Pancake Restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee. The charges were filed after the police officer was treated for a deep facial laceration, three broken teeth and several bruises. The case went to court and "The Alaskan" was found guilty and sentenced to six months in jail, but then the sentence was reduced to thirty days in the county work house and two years probation.

Apparently this brush with the law hasn't deterred "The Alaskan" any, for he is still out to batter and beat anyone who gets in his way. It is much too late for Alex Medina, but, perhaps, Mike "The Alaskan" York should be banned from the sport of professional wrestling before he kills again!

POPULAR PIN-UP: Bruno Sammartino





Pat Patterson: "Raul makes a great partner, because of his outlook on wrestling. Raul likes following the rules; however, his Latin temper will easily explode if his opponent breaks too many rules. As a tag partner, his eyes are always on the action and he's prepared for any eventuality."

Raul Mata: MEXICO'S YOUNG MAT STAR IS MAKING IT IN THE U.S.A.

BY ALLAN BOLTE

Raul Mata, the young former champion of Mexico, first appeared in our country only a few years ago. Now, he's making his mark on U.S. wrestling, and it looks like he'll be a star here for years to come.

Over the last several years there have been many extremely capable wrestlers grappling throughout the United States who were born and raised in Mexico, and only a few of them have been unpopular wrestlers, those whom the fans dislike simply because of their roughhouse, rule-shattering ways in the ring. The vast majority of the wrestlers from Mexico try to follow the rules, but then again they have Latin tempers that easily explode when an opponent steps too far out of line.

Take a look at Pepper Gomez. Gomez has a world of experience behind him and he is one of the greatest wrestlers in the sport. Pedro Morales is another topnotcher—a former World Champion, and he, too, was born in Mexico. A few others are Jose Lothario, Luis Martinez, Ricky Romero, Black Gordman, Raul Reyes; and the list could go on forever.

One of the newest wrestlers to hit these shores out of Mexico is young, talented Raul Mata and it's a fact that Mata is going places. Born and raised in Monterey, Mexico, 27 years ago, Mata first appeared in our country only a few years ago and he has been climbing constantly to the top of the ratings since the day he arrived here.

"I'll never forget when I first came to this country," Raul stated. "It was really thrilling for me. I was really so surprised that there were so many Mexicans living here. When I was a child, I spoke only Spanish, so you can imagine how difficult it was for me when I first arrived here. I spoke little English, and I was so amazed that everywhere I went there were Spanish-speaking citizens and I immediately began to feel right at home here.

"Of course," Mata continued, "It took a while for me to get used to the different ways of life here than in Mexico. However, that didn't really take too long and I really began enjoying myself here. The people were very friendly and likeable and, with the large number of Mexicans living here, I felt like I really was going to enjoy myself living in the United States."

One of the reasons Mata came to the United States was to wrestle. Mata is the former champion of Mexico and is out to win the United States Heavyweight Championship or to win the World's Tag Team Championship with a partner of his choice.

"I have always enjoyed wrestling all my life," Raul announced. "Even when I was a little boy, I used to wrestle around with all my friends and I always seemed to be the strongest, fastest and most capable of anyone in the area around my neighborhood. In high school I wrestled and I was one of the best on the wrestling team. The coach always was asking me, or, I should say, telling me, to be sure and go out for the wrestling team again this season since they need me so badly, and I always did.

"I didn't have that much time for other sports, because I naturally had to help out with the family, but my parents knew about my excellent athletic ability and they encouraged my participation in wrestling. I won the vast majority of my matches throughout high school and, trying not to sound like I'm boasting, I was always winning trophies and awards.

"I never much talked about my awards, because I have always been pretty quiet-spoken and modest. But deep inside I was very proud of myself for my sports accomplishments and I knew that I wanted to grow up and be a professional athlete of some kind, and I really wasn't too sure which sport but I had a feeling it would be wrestling.

The next thing Raul knew, he was wrestling professionally throughout his homeland. Raul really enjoyed himself and he was slowly but surely working his way up to being known as a leading professional wrestler throughout Mexico.

"All of my high school buddies remembered me and really it wasn't that long ago," added Mata. "I'm only 27 now and I was the youngest wrestler ever to win the Mexican Heavyweight Championship. I was very proud of myself and so were my friends."

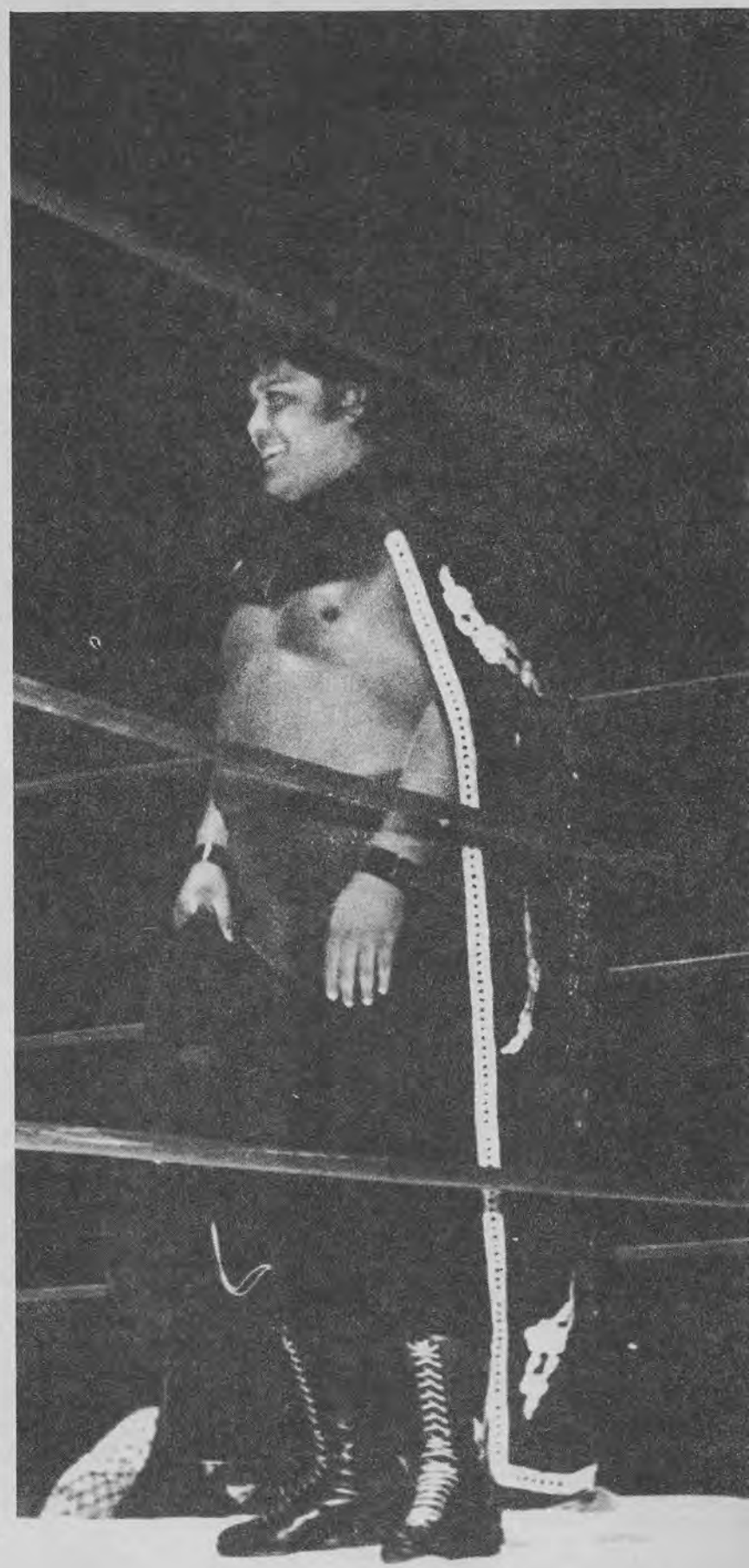
Mata has been wrestling throughout the West Coast areas over the last two years and he has been basing himself around the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas. While in San Francisco, Mata finds a hard time of it with such rugged grapplers as Moondog Mayne, Kurt and Karl Von Brauner and The Brute.

Raul first began teaming with fellow Mexican great Raul Reyes and the two made a good tag team combination; however, Reyes left the area and the two thus split up. Mata stayed on the West Coast and he now is main eventing all over the area.

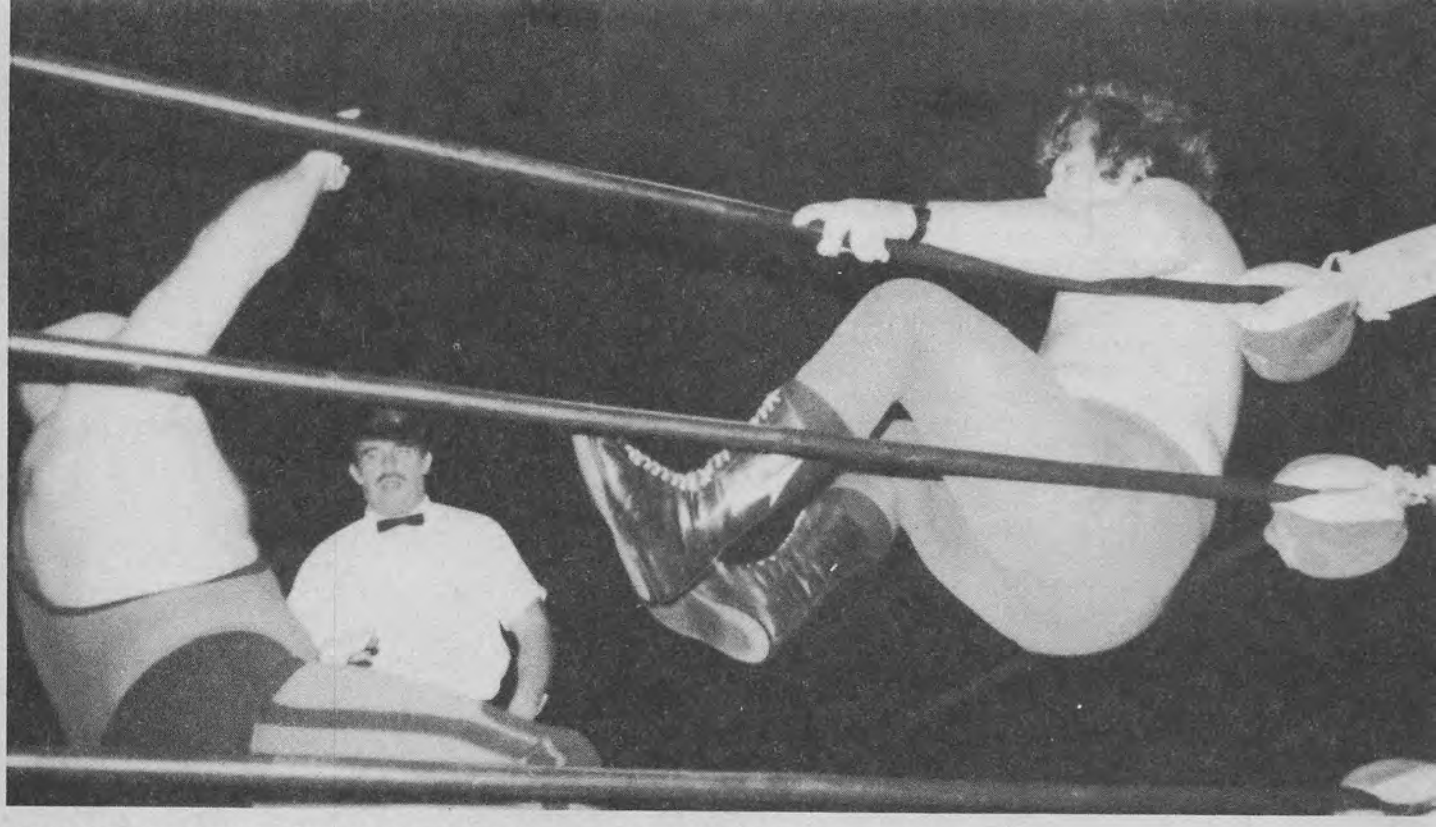
There's no doubting the fact that Mata is one of the most popular wrestlers on the coast. The fans love him because he is always willing to pose for pictures with them and to sign autographs for them. He always seems to have that friendly, likeable smile and he is always generous and thoughtful of other people. The promoters like him, because they know he means box-office, for there's nothing but action when Mata is in the ring. Most of the wrestlers like him because he makes such a great tag team partner.

Pat Patterson, a topnotch wrestler who has teamed with many men, had the following to say about Raul as a tag team partner:

"Raul makes a great partner, simply because of his outlook on wrestling," Pat stated. "Raul likes following the rules; however, his Latin temper will easily explode if his opponent breaks too many rules. As a tag partner, his eyes are always on the



Raul Mata: "I'll never forget when I first came to this country. I was really so surprised that there were so many Mexicans living here . . . I spoke little English, and I was so amazed that everywhere I went there were Spanish-speaking citizens and I immediately began to feel right at home here."



Above: Mata (on right) vs. Karl Von Brauner. Right: Moondog Mayne applies a nerve hold on Mata.

Above: An angry Raul Mata on the rampage flings Karl Von Brauner across the ring.

action and he's prepared for any eventuality. When I'm in trouble and both my opponents are double-teaming me, Mata is always there to help me. He is very dependable and a damned good wrestler."

Quite naturally, many wrestlers dislike Mata, because they are jealous of him. They're constantly trying to get him in the ring in hopes of ruining his good looks.

Who was the roughest wrestler Raul ever stepped in the ring with?

"Well, it really wasn't too long ago," Raul informed us. "I feel that my roughest match so far has been with The Brute and it was indeed a rough night for me. I weigh 229 pounds and The Brute weighs 317 pounds. I stand 5'10" tall and Brute stands 6'3" tall. So, you can tell the difference.

"However, I felt that I was ready for him. He won the first fall with his back-breaker hold and he wouldn't let me go after I gave up the fall and he finally did after the referee warned him that he would be disqualified and/or fined. I thought my back was broken in half and I was in pretty bad shape. The second fall started and he got the best of me again, but the only thing was he was breaking every rule he could. He would hit, kick, stomp, bite, and knee his way to victory and I finally had enough. I lost my temper and jumped all over him and the next thing he knew he was outside on the hard cement floor and he was counted out of the ring, so I won the second fall.

We wrestled for the third fall and this was something else. He began breaking all the rules and so did I. We both were hitting and punching like wild animals in the ring and the referee had a helluva time trying to properly restore order. He finally did and by that time my head was bleeding from a facial cut above the forehead, and The Brute knocked my sore spot right into the corner post, which only brought more blood.

"I could hardly see, because the blood was running right into my own eyes, and I was very mad. But, I was almost helpless because I was weakening, and The Brute then began biting at it. I could hear all the fans yelling for me to beat the hell out of him and I could hear half of the fans yelling to me in Spanish.

"Finally, I started punching away at him and the next thing I knew the bell rang and the match was over and I was the winner. The referee had disqualified the Brute for the third fall, so I won the second and third falls and the match; however, I really wasn't very happy. My forehead was split wide open and I wanted to hospitalize The Brute and he had already returned to his dressing room. I called him back over the microphone but he never returned. I was really mad, believe me.

"So, since then I have challenged The Brute to a return match with no disqualifications and he hasn't accepted. I asked the promoters to try to line up a return match between me and The Brute with no disqualifications; however, they said that The Brute hasn't accepted the match yet. Everyone knows he is afraid to step into the ring with me!"

Promoter Roy Shire first spotted Mata in Los Angeles almost a year ago and he immediately liked what he saw in Mata.

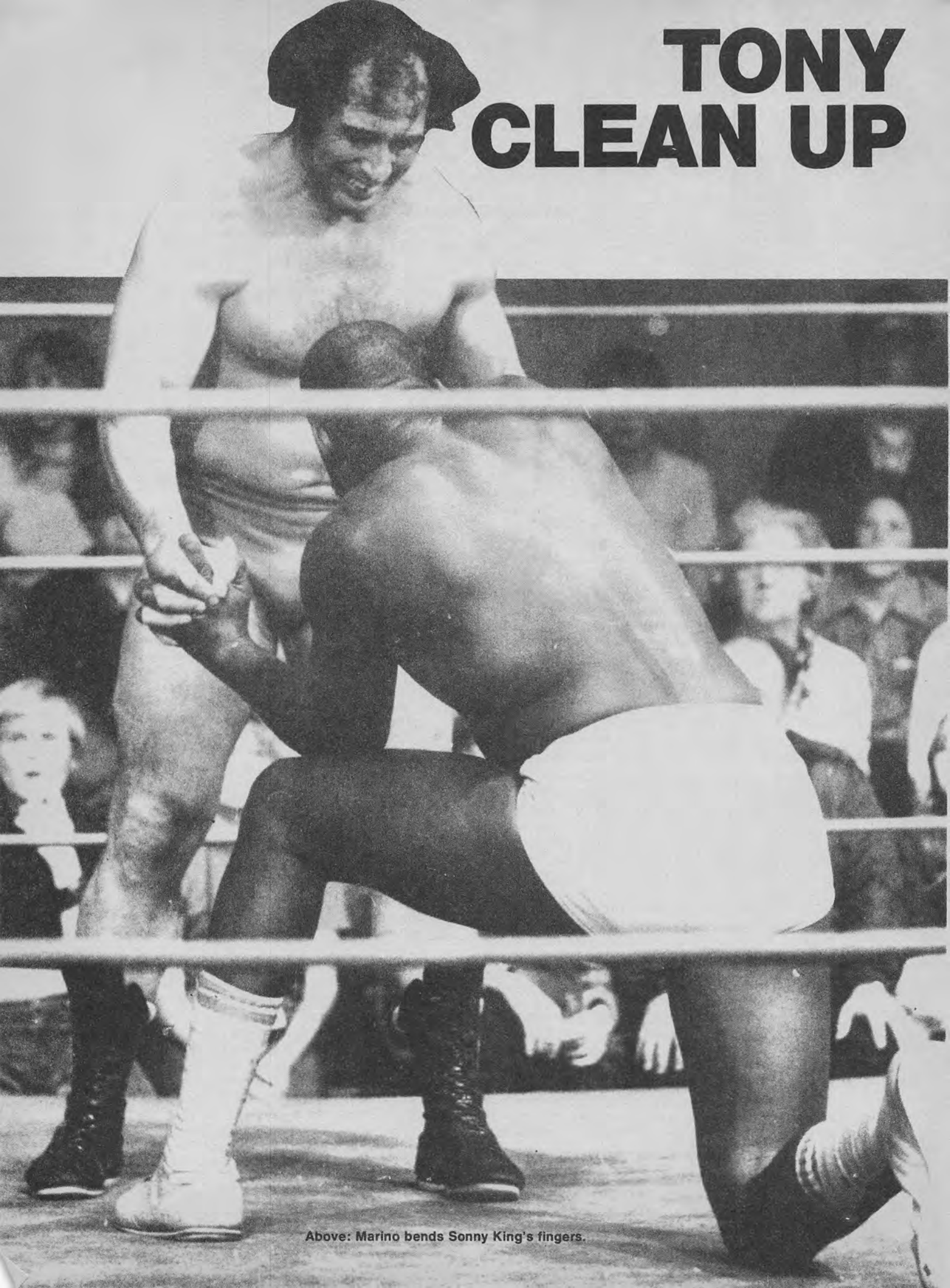
"I have judged many wrestlers over the last fifteen years," Shire says. "I was in Los Angeles and I saw Mata in action and I knew that he was a damned good wrestler. I checked into his records and I learned that he has an excellent wrestling record behind him, with the majority of his matches resulting in his victory, and I finally got a hold of him and told him that I was interested in his spending a good while in the San Francisco area and he agreed to.

"He first appeared in the Cow Palace, and the fans really loved him there and he soon acquired a very large following with the fans. They really liked him and I can see why. He has lots of personality and ability, and that's what it takes to be a champion wrestler."

Yes, Raul Mata is after a heavyweight wrestling championship and it looks as if he is going to get it. He has talent galore and a large following among wrestling fans.

Who knows; by the time this magazine is on the newsstands he may already have won the championship!

TONY CLEAN UP



Above: Marino bends Sonny King's fingers.

MARINO WANTS TO WRESTLING

BY BOB TRINGALI

A former holder of the Mr. America Title, with a powerfully built body, Tony Marino has come a long way in the wrestling world. But the 35-year-old Marino still has one main goal which he is intent on accomplishing. He won't be satisfied until he can drive madmen like The Sheik and Pampero Firpo out of wrestling.

He looked like something out of Esquire. He had on red and white double-knit checkered slacks with a matching shirt. It was a smart-looking ensemble, custom-made, and complete with medium-length white glossy boots. His hair was modish, long and black, and impeccably styled. If it wasn't for the fact that he was a wrestler, he could easily have passed for a rock singer as he walked through the athlete's entrance in Detroit's spacious Cobo Arena.

But Tony Marino is all wrestler. Underneath his finery is a powerfully built body. Not only powerful but perhaps the best developed one on the circuit. Despite the fact that he won the title of Mr. America years ago, Marino hasn't let time erode his body. His muscles are supple and well-defined. The passing years may have taken their toll on many others before him, but Marino, at the age of 35, still has too much pride to betray his body. His pride and his skill have brought him to the status of a main eventer and for Marino there is nothing else.

"I've worked too hard for too many years to get where I am," reasoned Marino. "Sure I take special care of my body. I still work out with weights every afternoon, no matter where I am. It's a sacrifice but well worth it. I shudder at the thought of allowing my muscles to get soft and my body to become flabby.

"I've seen it happen to others, a lot of them, I might add. It's sad, too. A wrestler, or an athlete for that matter, has to have pride in himself. Too often they hit the top and then begin to skid. I've hit the top and I want to stay there for a long time. As a wrestler goes, I am still young, what you would consider a seasoned campaigner. You know, in this business you need years and years of experience to really excel. Now that I am facing such a clever craftsman as The Sheik tonight, I need every bit of experience I have accumulated down through the years."

Marino has come a long way and is well aware of how hard it was for him at the beginning. He was born in the southern part of Italy, in a small town named Reggio Calbrea. However, he was raised in the United States. When he was still a baby, his mother brought him to Rochester, N.Y., where they joined her husband. Marino's father, a stone mason, had emigrated a year earlier and worked and saved enough money to bring his wife and child to the U.S.

Being strong and athletic, Marino easily became acclimated to sports. In high school, he competed in track, football and wrestling, excelling in each. However, any thoughts of furthering his education in college were quickly dispelled when he graduated, despite having a football scholarship. Marino's father became ill and couldn't work and Tony was faced with the responsibility of providing for the family.

Although his dreams of college were quashed, Tony nevertheless accepted the role of wage earner without any animosity. He felt he owed it to his family. The quickest way to get a job and earn a big dollar was construction work. Because of his size, Marino didn't have any difficulty in getting a job on a construction gang. The work was hard but the pay was good and it was all worth the effort.

But, Tony yearned to become a wrestler. It was his favorite sport in high school, and he enjoyed watching the matches on television. He was frustrated in the sense that he couldn't give up job security because of his family obligations. Nevertheless, he worked out his frustrations by turning to body-building in a local gym. This he did tirelessly six days a week.

It paid off even beyond Marino's hopes, at least in such a short span of time. Within two years, Marino entered and won the national Junior Mr. America Title.

"At first I just wanted to work off my frustrations, you know, attack the weights and produce a good sweat," admitted Marino. "But, the more I exercised the weights, the more I liked it. After a couple of months, I decided to set a goal and work toward the Junior Mr. America Title. It gave me something to shoot at, a goal, so to speak. About a year later, I was ready for the contest and I won it the first time out which was quite satisfying."

So Marino looked to bigger things. Having won the Junior Mr. America Title, he decided to enter the big one, the Mr. America Contest the following year. It required even more dedication and nobody realized that more than Marino. He worked harder than ever, entered the nationally known contest, and won! His beautifully developed body earned him additional honors. He earned the judges' nod for best legs, best chest and most muscular body.

Despite the satisfaction Marino derived, and the courage and confidence he acquired, he still felt frustrated. Marino still wanted to pursue his first love, wrestling. He had the knowledge of the sport and now the strength and the body to add to it. All he needed was the opportunity. It wasn't the easiest thing to get. There aren't too many openings for young, inexperienced wrestlers, no matter how good they look physically.

Marino contacted upstate New York promoter Pedro Martinez in Buffalo. The veteran matchmaker liked what he saw in the good-looking, well-built prospect. All he asked Marino was if he was serious about pursuing a wrestling career. When the youngster satisfied him with his answer, Martinez agreed to give him a start.

"Martinez was a former wrestler, and a good one at that, and he offered to personally train me," disclosed Marino. "I'll never forget the lesson he drove home. 'So you want to be a wrestler,' he said. Then he proceeded to drive his point home. He gave me beating after beating, but I didn't get discouraged. 'If you can take all that and keep coming back for more, then you must want to be a wrestler bad enough,' Martinez said."

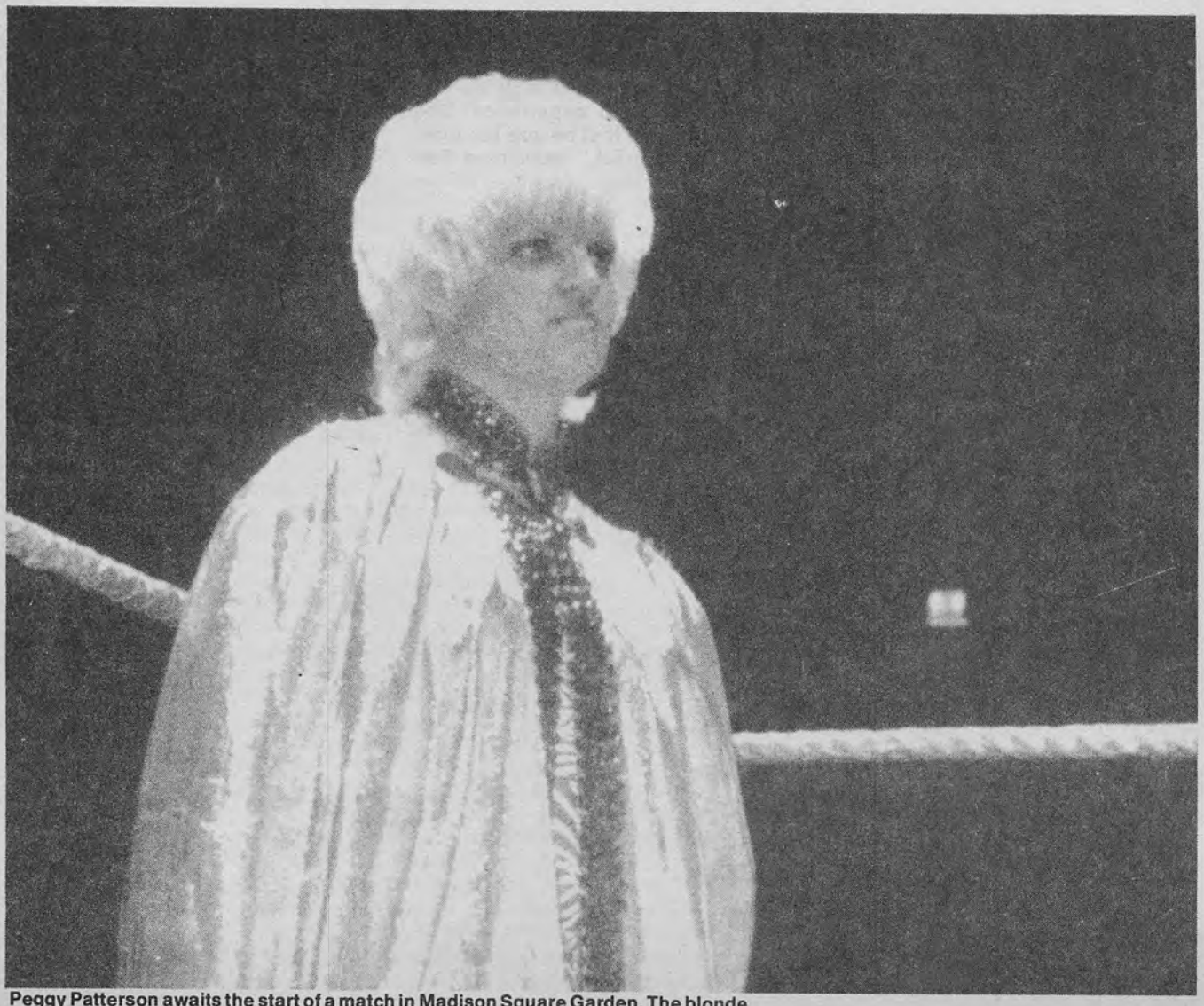
So, Marino's introduction to the world of wrestling began. As he said he would, Martinez trained the young hopeful for the next eight months. Marino thought he learned his lessons well. Now he wanted to test his skills in a ring. But Martinez told him he wasn't quite ready yet to turn professional. Marino grew impatient and returned

Continued on page 66

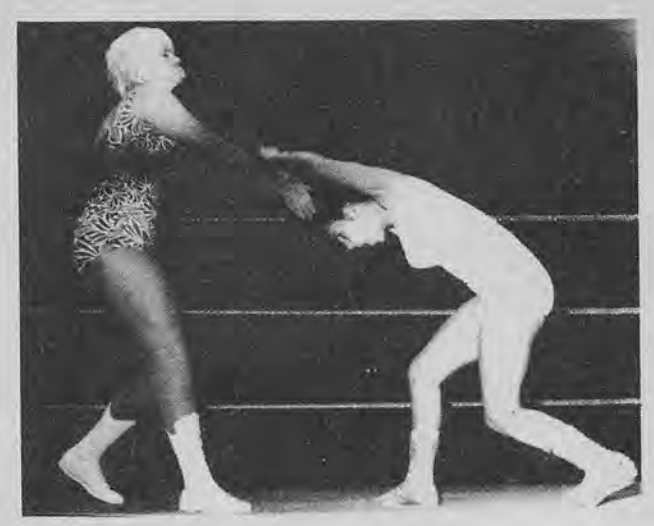
Female Confession

"LONELINESS IS MY TOUGHEST ENEMY!" ADMITS PEGGY PATTERSON

"I've been in love for three years and lonely just as long," says the frustrated blonde. "I'm lucky if I get to see my man twice a year." Despite it all, Peggy keeps on wrestling. BY BOB TRINGALI



Peggy Patterson awaits the start of a match in Madison Square Garden. The blonde from California wanted to be a wrestler from the time she was a little girl.



Left: Ouch! Patterson pulls an opponent by the hair. Above: Joyce Grable bends Patterson's leg.

She really didn't look like a wrestler. Not quite. She was big enough, all right, about six feet tall. In fact, she was quite statuesque. She had blond hair and green eyes which gave her a soft look, especially when she smiled. She spoke softly with a twang that was strictly country. There was a certain happiness in her voice and Peggy Patterson looked natural when she smiled, which was quite often.

At first, she was a bit pensive. It was understandable. This was her first appearance in New York's palatial Madison Square Garden and the significance of the moment affected her. Women wrestlers do not appear regularly on the Garden programs. The ones that do have to be top caliber. If they are good, they are asked to return. If not, then it's back on the remote roads to the small arenas in little heard of towns.

There is a certain glamour in being a female wrestler. The travel, the money, the name on the marquee. But, there is a definite loneliness, too. Peggy Patterson has experienced it. Most times the glamour of it all doesn't compensate for the loneliness. At least, not in Peggy's case. She's too much in love.

"I've been in love for three years and lonely just as long," confessed Peggy. "I love this business and I wouldn't be anything but a wrestler, but I love my man just as much. The only problem is that being a wrestler has kept me away from my fiance. I mean, I'm lucky if I get to see him twice a year. That's the truth. That's not much, is it?

"He's in Sacramento and I have been wrestling in every city but. The past two years I've been in the East, South and Southwest. I've been very busy every night, wrestling or traveling. It hasn't been easy. Not at all. Although I love wrestling, I really miss my fiance. It's not a comfortable situation. I mean, I wish I could have the best of two worlds. Right now, that's not possible. But I have to keep going and keep hoping."

Ironically, it was through wrestling that Peggy met her boyfriend. She was on a tour of Japan three years ago when it happened. Her boyfriend was an Air Force sergeant at the time she met him. It was the proverbial love at first sight experience. She knew right then that he was the one.

"He's just great," exclaimed Patterson. "He loves me for who I am—a person. He is 100% for the fact that I am a wrestler. As long as I'm happy, he's happy. He knows how much wrestling means to me. He never objects or wants me to give it up. That's how much understanding he has. That's why I love him so. He's just so wonderful.

"But the loneliness is there for me. I know it's there for him, too. But at least he gets the chance to go home every night. I am somewhere else every night. The only way I help overcome the loneliness is writing him a letter three or four times a week. We also manage to call each other a couple of times, too. Just hearing his voice means so much."

Although Patterson got her first start in California, she hasn't appeared in a ring there the past three years, even though she is a native of the state. She was born in Fresno 23 years ago and her parents still have a home there. A big girl, Peggy was quite active in sports when she was in high school. She participated in a number of sports, track, swimming, volley ball, tennis and basketball. But the one sport that she really wanted to compete in, wrestling, wasn't on the program.

"I had always loved wrestling as a child," admitted Peggy. "I kept asking my high school coaches why they didn't have girl wrestling on the program. They couldn't understand why I had so much interest in wrestling. I told them that I wanted to become a wrestler when I graduated. They didn't take me too seriously until I showed them my scrapbook which contained hundreds of pictures.

"My father was a big wrestling fan and he took me to the matches with him. I developed an interest in the sport by watching television every week. I had a mad crush on Pat Patterson and loved the thrills and excitement that wrestling presented. I couldn't wait to finish high school and become a wrestler. I knew that the opportunities weren't too good for breaking in but I was determined."

It was a good thing that Peggy had determination. She needed every bit of it at the beginning. The first promoter she contacted, Roy Shire in San Francisco, discouraged her. He told her that she was too heavy. Then she contacted Moto in Los Angeles. He told her the same thing. It looked hopeless.

But Peggy was far from discouraged. She began training on her own. When she trimmed down, she enrolled in Mildred Burke's and Mae Weston's wrestling school in Los Angeles. The two former mat stars worked with Patterson for over a year.

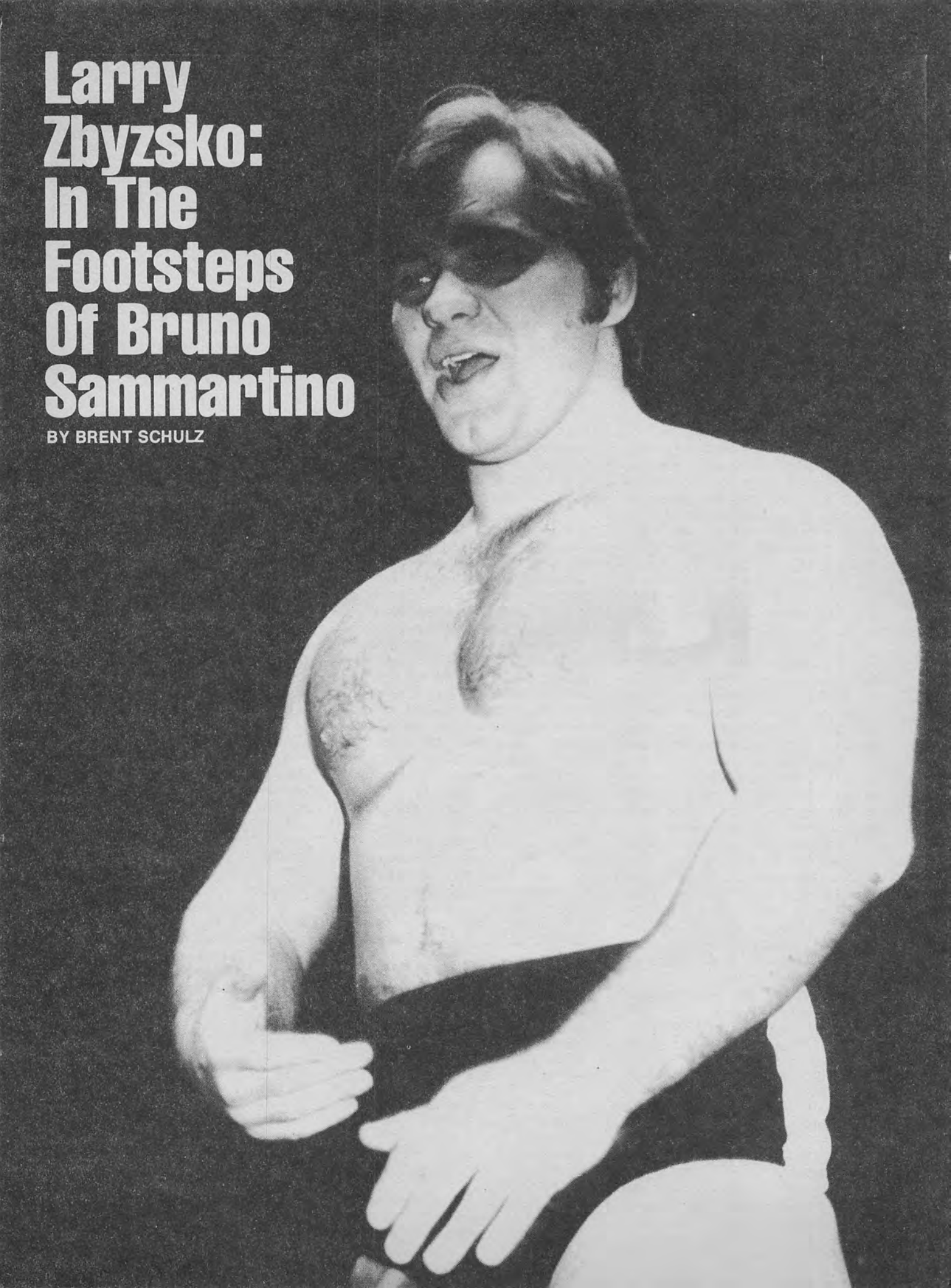
"Those two helped me a great deal at the beginning," disclosed Patterson. "Being former wrestlers, they taught me quite a bit. But the one wrestler I always admired was Moolah. She is the greatest. Like or hate her, she is the champion. If I can become as good as her that's saying a lot. Only time will tell."

Patterson made her professional debut against Jean Harris in Phoenix, Arizona. It was a successful one which went a long way toward help-

Continued on page 54

Larry Zbyzsko: In The Footsteps Of Bruno Sammartino

BY BRENT SCHULZ



Under the training of his idol, Bruno Sammartino, from the age of 12, Larry Zbyzsko developed the discipline and skills necessary to make it to the top in the competitive world of pro wrestling. Now it appears that Zbyzsko himself might someday hold the WWWF title, just like his teacher.

Larry Zbyzsko warmly shakes the hand of his trainer, advisor and close friend, Bruno Sammartino, right, as Bruno's manager, Arnold Skaaland, looks on.

Larry Zbyzsko entered the Philadelphia Arena, carrying his travel bag. The arena was empty and the workers were busy setting up the seats for the night's matches. Zbyzsko stopped and looked around. He took in a deep breath, then exhaled. He felt good. He was happy to be back in old, familiar surroundings. Soon he would be meeting some old friends and get reacquainted. He knew that he would see some new faces, too—some friendly and some not so friendly.

Larry walked over to the ring which had been set up earlier. He put down his travel bag and entered the ring. He tested the ropes, leaning against them. One rope felt loose and he made a note to inform the ring custodian. Then he picked up his travel bag and went to the dressing room.

Within a short period of time, some other wrestlers also showed up. Larry felt happy as he greeted friends like Chief Jay Strongbow; Gorilla Monsoon; Tony Garea and Jose Gonzales. He joined them in talking over old times and discussing what they had been doing since last seeing each other.

Finally, the wrestler Larry had long waited to see arrived. Zbyzsko hugged his friend and mentor, Bruno Sammartino, the man responsible for him becoming a professional wrestler. Larry now felt completely at home, among good friends. Later, he was introduced to some others—Chief Billy White Wolf; Johnny Rivera and Bob Backlund. Larry and Bob weren't exactly strangers as they had wrestled on the same cards in southern arenas.

It had been two full years since Larry Zbyzsko had last appeared in the WWWF. His old friends told him who was appearing in the area—wrestlers whom Larry would eventually wrestle. Larry listened intently because the list was very impressive: Ken Patera; Stan Stasiak; Baron Fritz Von Raschke; Tor Kamata; Baron Mikel Scicluna; Doug Gilbert; Nikolai Volkoff. Also, the infamous managers Fred Blassie; The Grand Wizard and Lou Albano were still present to make life miserable.

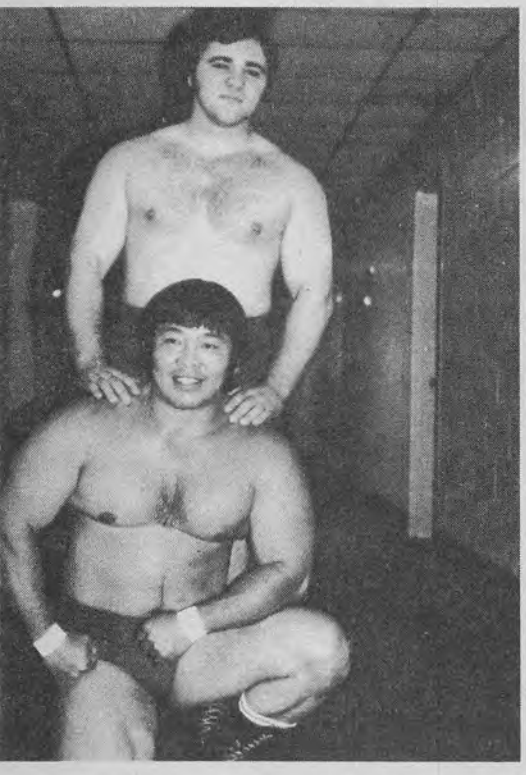
"I see that the competition is very keen, as usual, in the WWWF. My stay here won't exactly be boring," explained Larry. "I've wanted to return for months but prior commitments prevented it. I love the fans here in the WWWF. They always make you feel welcome. I'm glad to be back."

Since leaving the WWWF area two years ago, Larry has traveled to many areas, meeting all kinds of wrestlers. In the south, Larry spent well over a year combating the best those areas had to offer. That stay brought painful memories, because Larry was injured twice, which kept him out of active wrestling for months.

"I received my first injuring to my back which kept me out for six weeks." explained Larry. "Then I felt recovered enough to return but soon I reinjured the back. This time I was out for two months. I went home to Pittsburgh to recuperate. There I took in the matches and spent time

Here Zbyzsko poses for Popular Wrestling with two of his favorite tag partners: (above) Chief Jay Strongbow; (below) Dean Ho.

Above: Larry Zbyzsko jolts Luscious Johnny Valiant. Larry claims the Valiants were one of the toughest teams he ever faced.



Below: With a mighty Armwhip, Larry Zbyzsko gives huge Nikolai Volkoff a ride across the ring.

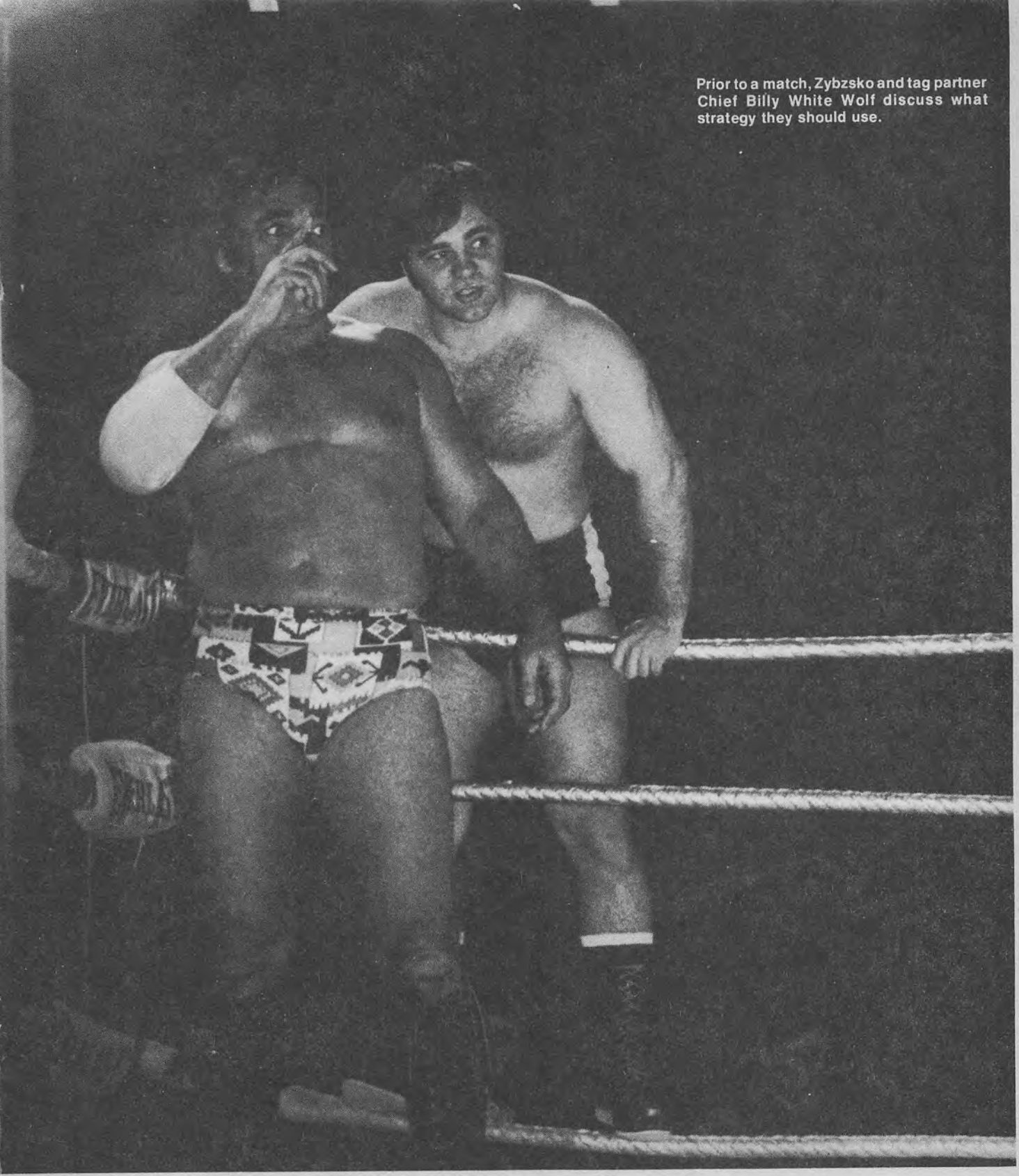
with Bruno. This was around the time Bruno was also recovering from his neck injury by Stan Hansen."

From the rings in the south, Larry Zbyzsko ventured to southern California where he immediately became a fans' favorite. Larry soon captured the TV Championship from Don "Fonzo" Fargo. This was the very first championship he had won since turning pro wrestler. For the next six months, he successfully defended the title until he lost it to The Hangman.

While in California, Larry participated in many tag team matches with Raul Mata; Carlos Mata; Chavo Guerrero; and Butcher Vachon, against the likes of The Hangman; Roddy Piper; The Scorpions; Super Scorpion; Don Fargo; Frank Monte.

Zbyzsko found his appearances in the southern rings of California most rewarding. The competition was tougher, and the matches faster than those in the WWWF. "The wrestlers out there rely on speed. This is because the weight is less than the wrestlers who appear in the WWWF."

Larry has expanded his repertoire of holds. He has been using more Dropkicks and flying maneuvers. Normally, he used to end his matches with a Bearhug or Backbreaker. Now, he also uses a Reverse Backdrop with success.



Prior to a match, Zybzsko and tag partner Chief Billy White Wolf discuss what strategy they should use.

"I learned this new maneuver from watching wrestlers like Jack Brisco and Mike Graham. They are expert at it. I find I can execute it with ease. I have much more to learn as I've been only wrestling for five years now. I want to learn all that I can. This hold is a Suplex pure and simple. Call it a Reverse Backdrop or whatever. I've mastered this hold where I can pick up a wrestler well over 300 pounds and pin him after using this Suplex."

Larry Zbyzsko has come a long way from the young boy who always wanted to become a professional wrestler. The young boy of twelve who idolized Bruno Sammartino. Who always envisioned himself in the role of the WWWF champion. The young boy who decided to seek out the champion at his home one day.

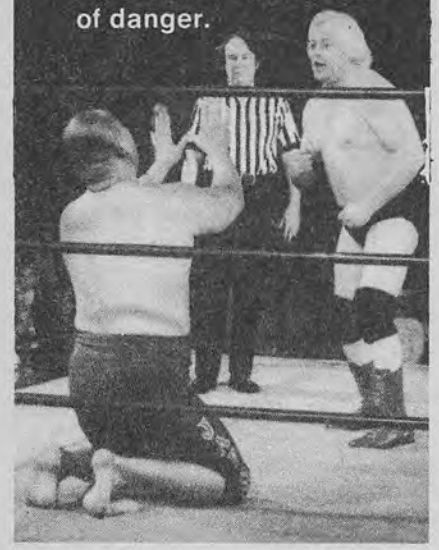
Larry went to Bruno's home and saw the champion spending his free time with his family in their Pittsburgh home. Bruno was by his swimming pool one summer day and Larry was watching from the thick bushes, hidden. But not hidden well enough, because Bruno saw the young lad.

The usually shy Larry quickly explained that he wanted to become a wrestler, that Bruno was his idol. Bruno had heard such things before, but the tone of voice and the eyes of

Continued on page 63

Ray Stevens Declares: "I ENJOY

Whether he's bulldogging steers, racing motorcycles, or wrestling one of the top mat villains in the country, Ray Stevens is one man who's not afraid of danger.

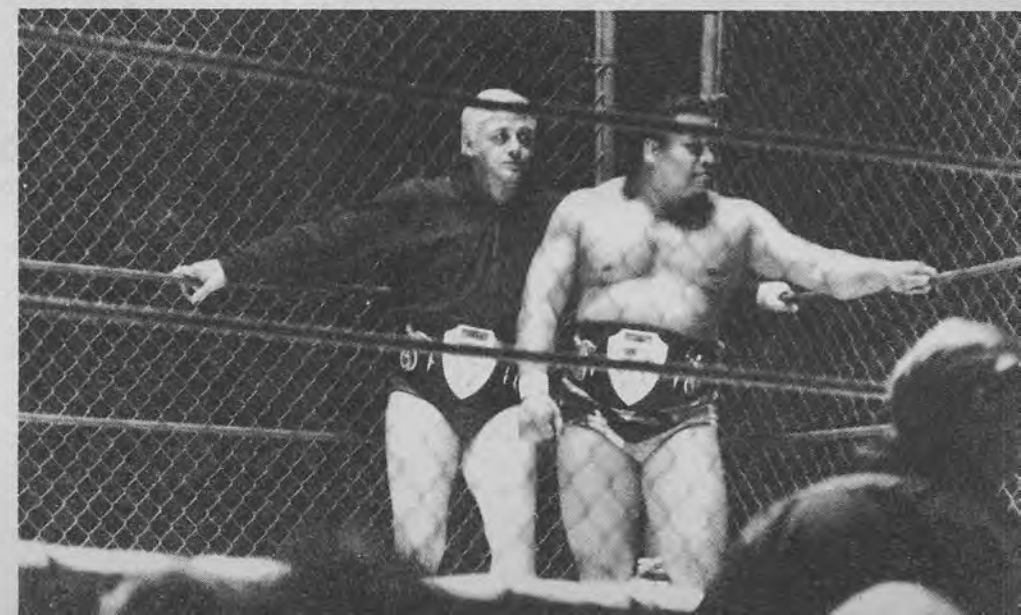


In the days of yesteryear, wrestlers such as Ed "Strangler" Lewis, Lou Thesz, Gorgeous George, Leo Nomellini, and others were highly rated. They appeared in main events in virtually every major city of the country.

Nowadays the greats following in their footsteps include Pat Patterson, Pedro Morales, Bruno Sammartino, The Valiant Brothers and Ray "Blond Bomber" Stevens. All of the above named grapplers are capable; however, many feel that Stevens is by far the greatest of all.

The husky blond first began wrestling as a professional in 1961 and found himself appearing in the Northern California area, with San Francisco being his main headquarters. At the young, tender age of 21, Ray met some of the best in the sport and, the next thing he knew, he was in the ring wrestling with and against them.

"I won't say it all happened overnight," Stevens recalls, "however, it all came about at once. I always loved competitive sports, particularly boxing, football and wrestling. Street fighting was one of my favorite pasttimes. Hell, growing up in New York City, it's no wonder! As a teenager I was always involved in fights and brawls with both friends and enemies and I soon learned to take care of myself. I had to, if I wanted to survive.



Right: (upper photo) Stevens vs. Pat Patterson, in their death match. Patterson is wearing a mask, hoping to slip an object inside it for the purpose of headbutting Stevens into oblivion.

DANGER!"

BY ALLAN BOLTE

Left: Stevens and Peter Maivia display their World Tag Team Championship belts, prior to a match in San Francisco's Cow Palace.

Stevens, Cyclone Negro (center), and Peter Maivia (right) await the start of a six-man tag match.

"I came from a family that wasn't too rich so you could hardly say I had steak every night. In fact, some evenings we didn't eat at all. Unfortunately I never finished high school for several reasons. For one, I had to get out and work and earn some money for myself and family. My brothers and sisters were doing the same thing, and this left little time for school. I just had to quit, that's all. Leaving school has never harmed me to this day and I am glad. I feel that I have learned more about life, money and the world on my own, through my experiences and world travels throughout the last 15 years."

It was when Stevens left high school to get work that he stumbled into wrestling—accidentally. He had been working out regularly in the local gyms and YMCA in New York City when a few promoters spotted him and approached him. After all, he was young, very muscular and strong, rough and seemingly capable.

"They asked me if I was interested in taking up wrestling professionally," Stevens announced. "When I was informed that I could travel, make good money, meet people and be involved in a rough, competitive sport, I was immediately all for it. I knew this was just what I wanted. Most important of all, I would be making damned good money.

"It wasn't all that easy, though. I was locked in a small room with a trainer who was 6'2", and he weighed about 240 pounds—all solid muscle. I had to wrestle him and I don't know how I did. I just had to stay with him for 10 minutes and he nearly tore me apart. It taught me how to protect myself, though. It was a good experience for me and although I was scared, I learned a lot."

Stevens, at age 21, weighed 225 pounds and stood 5'11". His good looks would make him popular with the fans, promoters predicted. Quite the contrary. The moment Ray stepped foot in the ring he broke the rules. He soon became known as one of the roughest, most sadistic wrestlers in the ring.

He enjoyed wrestling around the San Francisco area and his extreme unpopularity with everyone didn't bother him in the least. Just so long as he won matches and made good money.

"The only problem I had was the fans," Ray stated. "One would occasionally manage to follow me home and find out where I lived. They would dump trash on my lawn, play practical jokes and slash my tires. It began to finally get to me and I didn't like it a bit. So, after a few years of wrestling there, I moved on and found Chicago to my liking. To this

day, San Francisco and Chicago are two of my favorite areas to both live and wrestle."

In San Francisco he became known as the "Blond Bomber" and his "bombs-away attack" hold saw him leap off the top rope onto his fallen opponent's chest and throat. Many challengers were out of action for several days or weeks due to the tremendous effect of the punishing hold. He finally acquired the United States Heavyweight Championship and successfully defended his crown against many capable challengers including Kinji Shibuya, Bearcat Wright, Cowboy Bill Watts, Dom DeNucci, Cowboy Bob Ellis, and Pepper Gomez. He then lost the crown to Gomez and left for Chicago.

A year later he returned to the West Coast with a totally new image. He was going to follow the rules, if it killed him, and win the popularity of all the fans, promoters, announcers and referees. Everyone was very leery of him at first, but soon enough he became one of the most popular wrestlers in the area. He decided to form a tag team and he chose Gomez, his former enemy, as his partner and surprisingly enough the two formed a fantastic combination and won the World's Tag Championship from the wily Japanese team of Mitsu Arakawa and Kinji Shibuya.

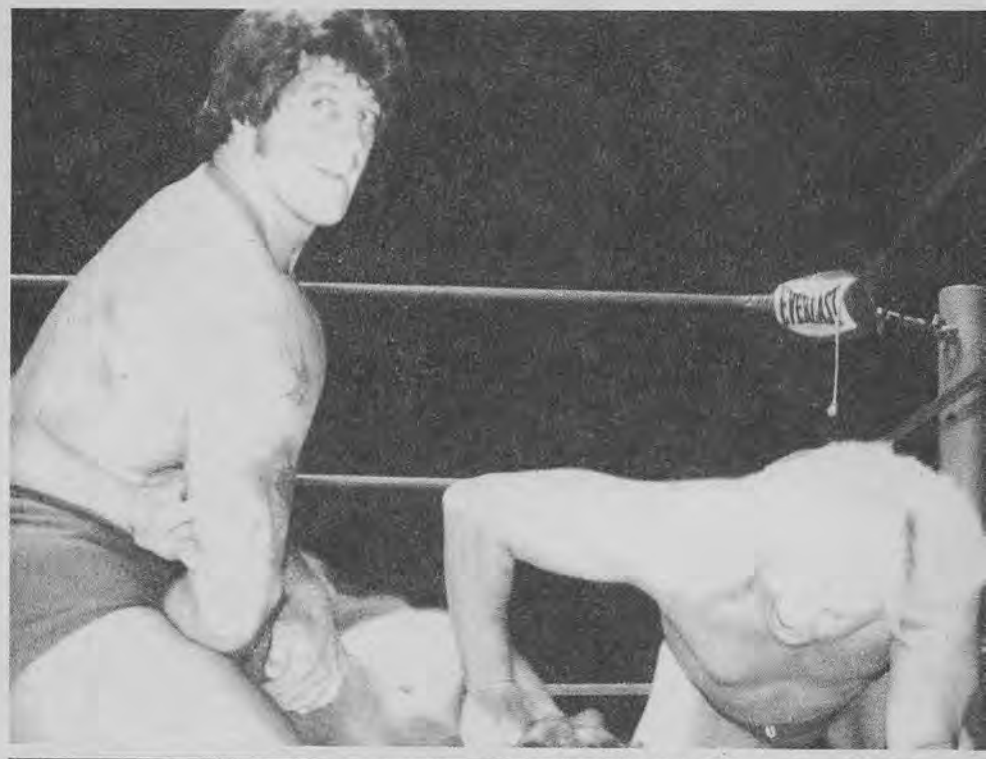
Stevens had quite a tag combination with Canada's Pat Patterson and when Stevens changed his ways to follow the rules Patterson was furious.

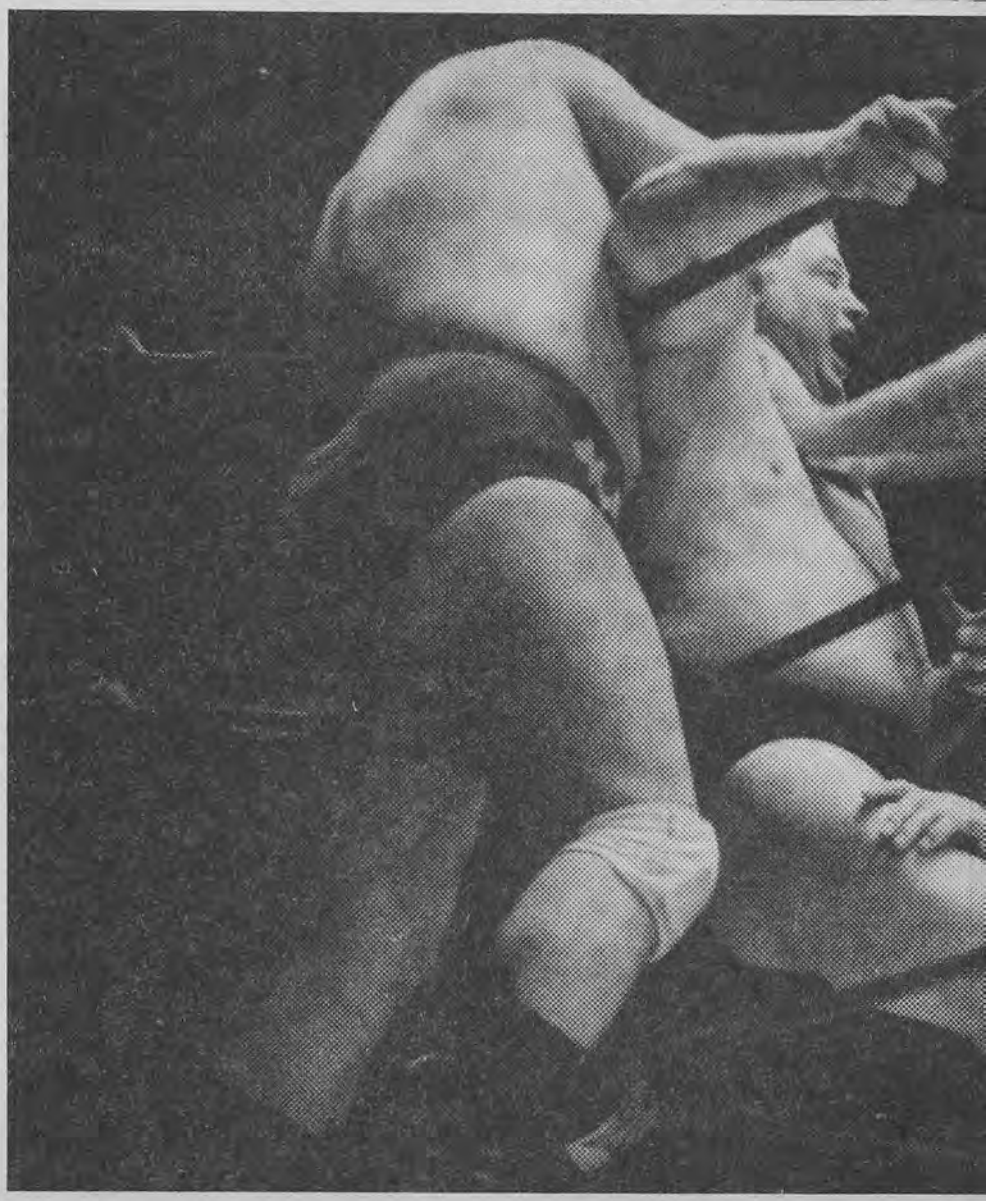
"I had plans of teaming with Stevens again and winning the tag titles," Patterson shouted. "I will never team with a traitor like that again. He doesn't know what he's doing. He's crazy, I tell you."

This started a series of matches between Patterson and Stevens and the fans were for Ray all the way. Since then, Patterson, too, has followed Stevens' style in changing his ways, and at this writing Patterson is also very popular with fans.

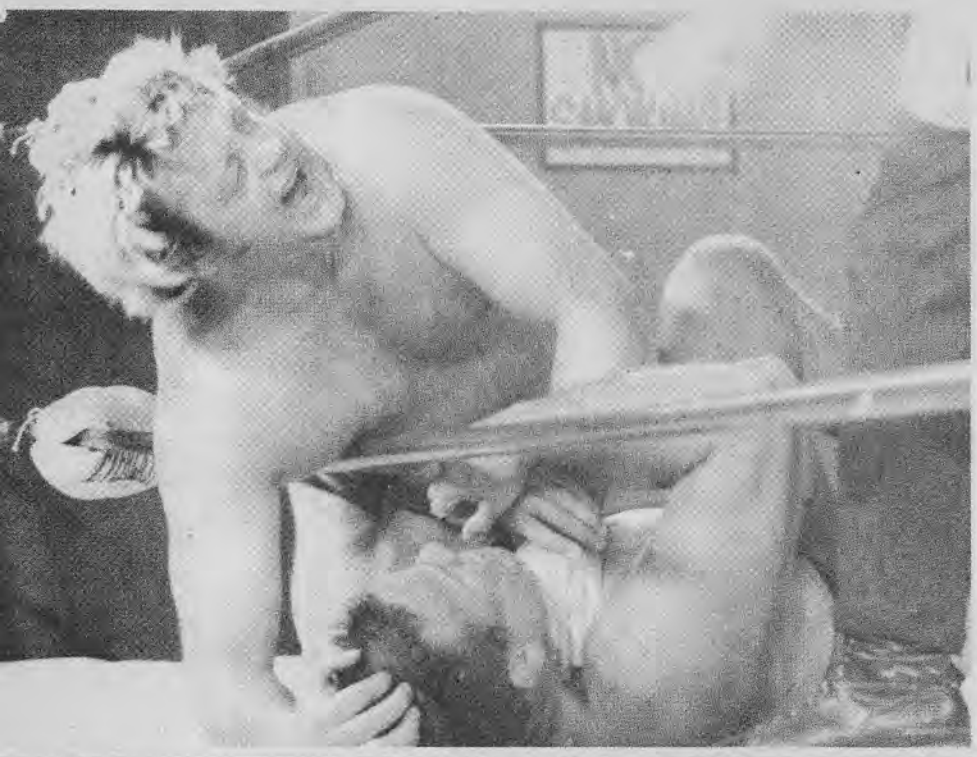
When Stevens enters the ring, he is prepared for any eventuality. If his opponent wants to follow the rules, then so can Ray. On the other hand, if his foe wants to break them and rough it up, Stevens loves doing that, too. It brings out the "old" Ray Stevens.

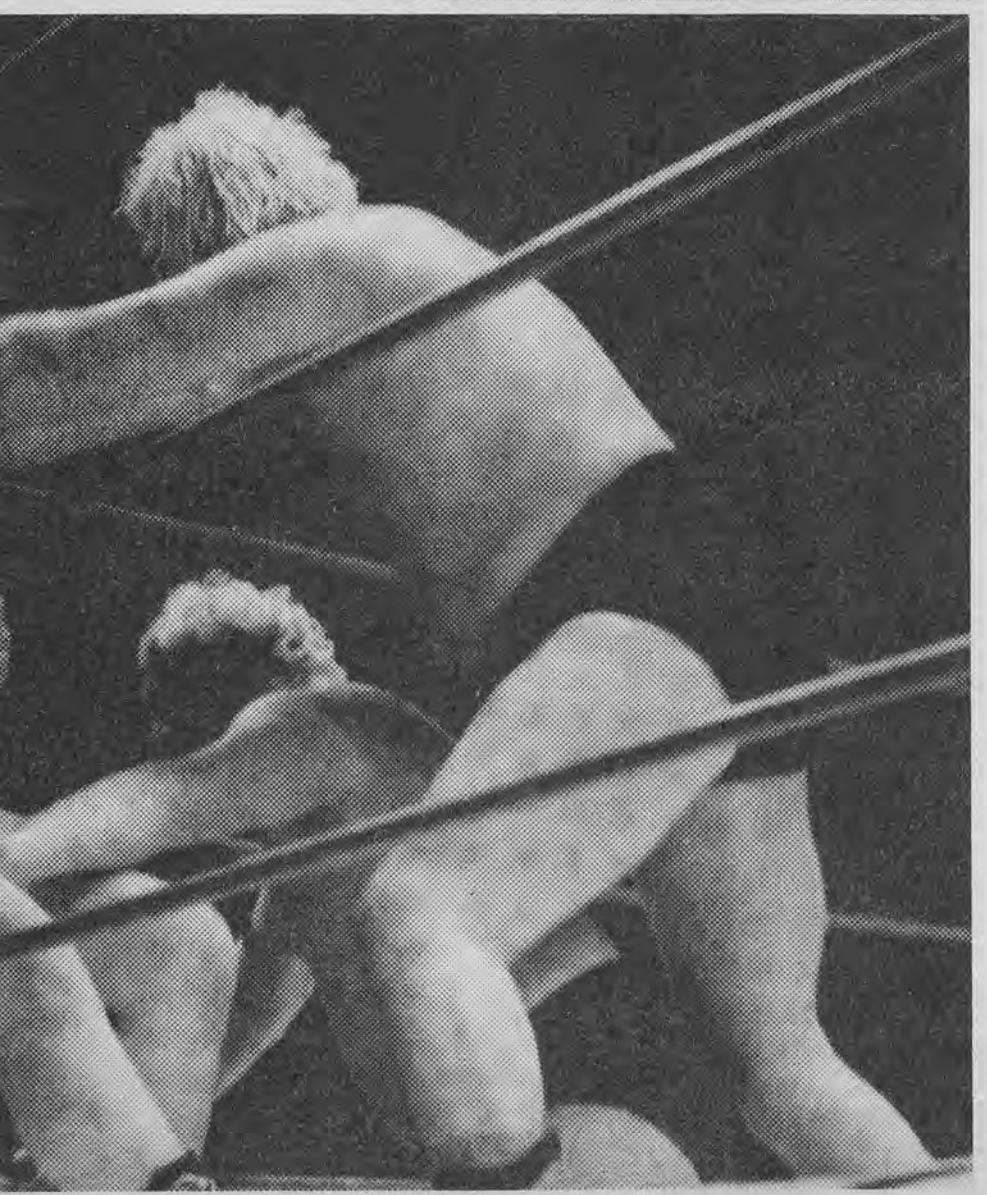
In Chicago, Stevens formed a great tag combination with equally rugged Nick Bockwinkle and the two were a vicious team. They were hated by all, but, admittedly, they were quite a successful team.





Upper left: Tony Garea holds Don Muraco while Stevens chokes him. Upper right: Stevens chokes Pedro Godoy.





"I seem to automatically become a bit rougher when I am in the Chicago area," Stevens admits. "I try to be a little nicer, a bit better sport in the Northern California area. My whole attitude changes when in Chicago, particularly when I'm teaming with or around Bockwinkle. Sometimes I feel like I actually have a dual personality and it changes as I commute between the two areas."

Not that the blond has wrestled in the United States only around Chicago and San Francisco. Stevens was highly successful when touring Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. It was in the Far East that he ran into Samoa's Chief Peter Maivia, a smiling 270-pounder who provides nothing but action when on the mat. The two joined forces and defeated many leading tag teams.

"I really enjoyed teaming with Maivia," Ray stated. "He is a fantastic tag partner to have. He is very capable in single matches as well and that is what begins to form a good team. I feel Maivia is behind me all the way whenever he is on my side, and it gives me an extra, added feeling of security.

"That's what I must have in any tag team," he continued. "Someone who can be rough like me, if necessary, and someone who is as capable. I will never team with anyone who I feel can't hold his own. I will back any partner I have 100 percent and I would expect the same from him."

Does Stevens prefer to wrestle in tag matches or in single bouts?

"I enjoy both, since I love wrestling so much," he answered. "However, if I really had to choose between the two, I would take single wrestling. This is always one against one and it brings on individual competition. This way I have no one I must share a win with or, on the other hand, to blame a loss on. It's just man against man. I'm not saying I don't like tag matches. I held the World's Tag Team Championship with both Pepper Gomez and Pat Patterson and I have had many great tag bouts with many outstanding partners. I just feel that single wrestling is more up my alley."

One of the wildest matches The Bomber was in took place several years ago, in San Francisco's huge Cow Palace. Stevens, popular with fans, took on Pat Patterson, the most sadistic wrestler in the area at that time—a man who was very unpopu-

Left: Stevens is in trouble during this recent match.

lar and did anything within his power to break the rules. The two met in a "Death Match" before a sold-out crowd of 17,000 and it was one of the bloodiest, wildest knock-down-drag-out brawls ever witnessed.

In a death match there are absolutely no rules. There is no time limit, no stopping for blood, no count-outs, and falls do not count. Both wrestlers keep fighting until one man cannot answer the bell. After 35 minutes of wrestling both Patterson and Stevens were cut badly and bleeding severely, and Stevens was the winner. Many felt he used a pair of brass knuckles to beat Patterson, though, and the two continued fighting until the referee and a few wrestlers managed to separate the two. By the time they were finished, Patterson managed to walk away and Stevens was carried out. It definitely was quite a battle.

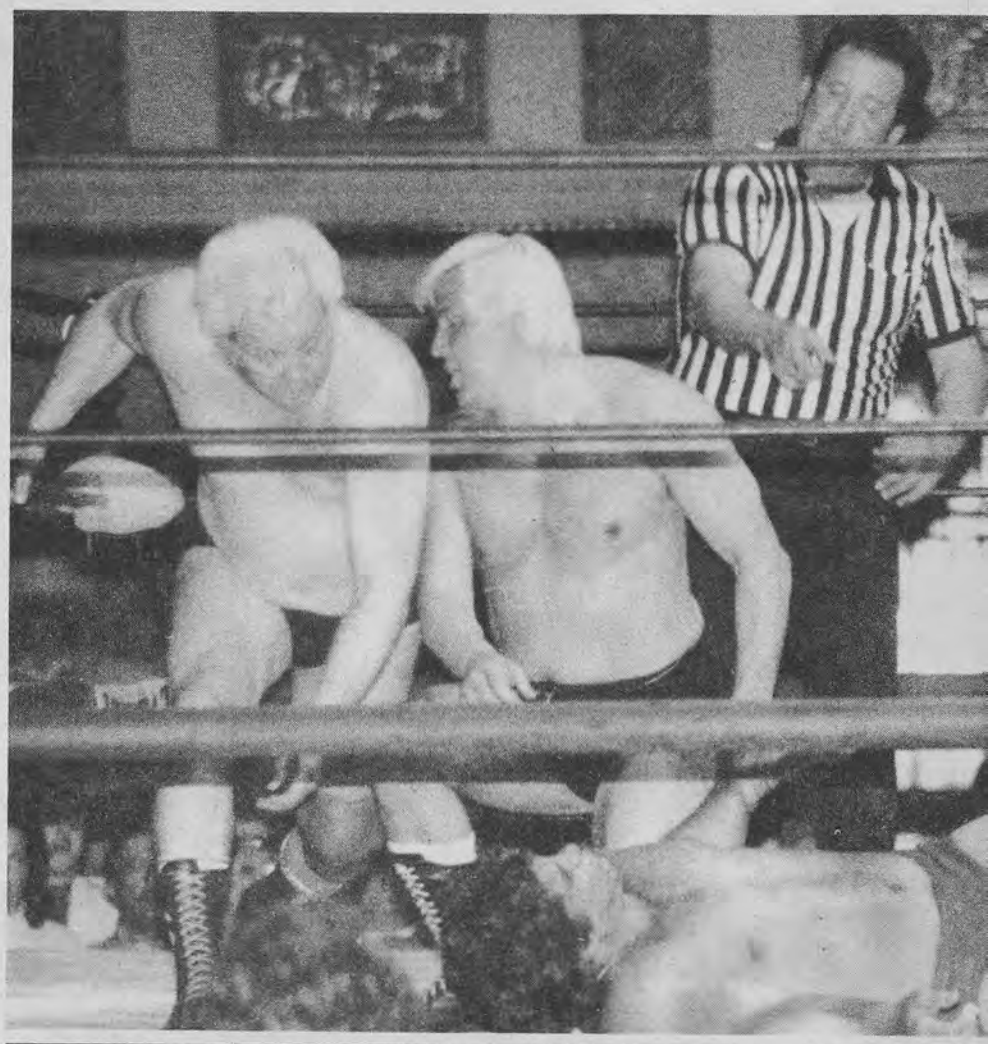
"I enjoy anything that is dangerous and rough," Ray insisted. "Like death matches, battle-royals, cage matches, lumberjack matches. I spend lots of time on the side bulldogging steers and racing my motorcycle, so you can imagine how and why I like it rough."

On one occasion Stevens raced one motorcycle too many. He ended up with a badly cut head and a broken leg, which put him out of action for a few months, costing him money and his championship belt.

"I had warned Stevens about his extra activities like bulldogging and racing," promoter Roy Shire said. "I told him that I suggest he quit them and devote all that time to something a bit safer or it will damage his wrestling career. But, he didn't want to listen and I really couldn't tell him what to do with his personal life. So, a few months later he got hurt in a race and was out of action for a few months. He was scheduled to wrestle in a match the following week and he had to forfeit his belt to the challenger."

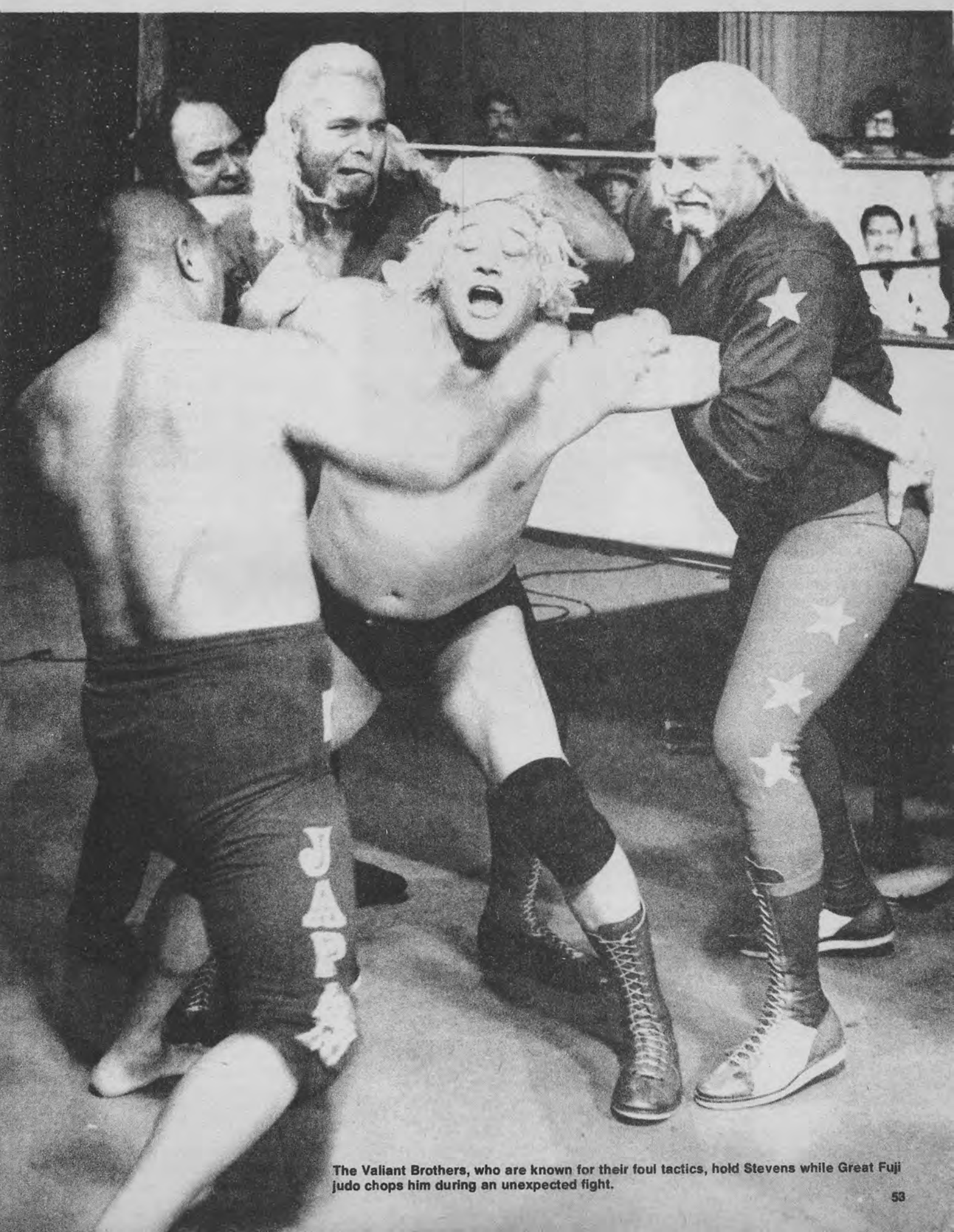
Yes, Ray "Blond Bomber" Stevens has seen a lot of the world, defeated the best in the business and made lots of money throughout the last 16 years. Now, at 37, Stevens still wants to take on the best and defeat anyone in wrestling who cares to challenge him.

Many other wrestlers insist he is at the peak of his career and has several successful years ahead of him. If you ask Ray, he'll undoubtedly agree. After all, Ray Stevens is his own greatest admirer.



Upper right: Ray (left) and Pat Patterson double-team Don Muraco.

Right: Stevens and tag partner Peter Maivia await the start of a match.



The Valiant Brothers, who are known for their foul tactics, hold Stevens while Great Fuji judo chops him during an unexpected fight.

PEGGY PATTERSON
Continued from page 43

Above: (upper photo) Peggy Patterson works over Joyce Grable. (lower photo) Patterson applies a side headlock on an opponent.

ing her establish confidence.

"Before the match I was scared," admitted Patterson. "After all, the only wrestling I did was while I was training. There's a world of difference in working out and wrestling for keeps. I didn't know what to expect, or how good I really was. Winning the first time out was very important."

Patterson spent the first two years of her new career on the west coast and in western Canada. She also made a trip to Japan which was quite unusual for a young professional. Appearances in Japan are usually reserved for veteran wrestlers. However, Patterson showed so much promise and had such a successful beginning that she was included on the trip.

The experience was well worth it. Not only did she meet her fiance then, but she also accumulated valuable exposure in a foreign ring.

"The Japanese wrestlers are very tough, tougher than the American ones," revealed Patterson. "They are schooled in judo and karate and I learned a lot from them. It's an experience I'll never forget."

Patterson is a paradox. On some nights, she has the crowd cheering her on as a heroine. On other nights, she displays such a villainous nature that she incurs the fans' wrath. It doesn't bother her in the least. As long as the money is good, she could care less how the fans react.

"I'm big enough to do what I want to in the ring," explains Peggy. "Actually, the villains of the ring fascinate me. In fact, I try to pattern myself after Pat Patterson. I have always enjoyed watching him perform."

While she has admired Moolah and watched Patterson, Peggy has her own style, one that has contributed to her success up until now. Her size and her strength have made it look easy. One of her favorite holds is the Boston Crab. When Peggy applies it, it is a submission hold. She knocks her opponent to the mat, turns her over, sits on her back and leans backward pulling her helpless foe's legs backward as far as she can go. The pain is enough to cause her opponent to yield.

Another of Peggy's preferred maneuvers is the Elbow Smash. With her height and power, it's an effective weapon. In executing it, Peggy throws her opponent into the ropes and thrusts her elbow into her opponent's throat as she bounces off the ropes. The move often dazes her foe and provides Peggy with a big advantage.

Patterson's success hasn't been without pain. She has had her share of bumps and bruises along the way. She suffered broken ribs while training to become a wrestler. Three years ago she had her nose broken in a match against Jan Sheridan in Springfield, Mass. Before that she suffered a cut above her left eye in a battle with Marilyn Bender in Los Angeles. Bender kicked Patterson in the eye opening a gash that required five stitches to close.

The one thing that has kept her going and coming back for more is money. Patterson figures that in a good year she can earn as much as $30,000. If she won the world's championship, it could mean even more.

"Moolah is my aim," exclaimed Patterson. "Her belt and the big dollars that go with it are my aim. There's no doubt about it, she's the best. She just keeps on going all these years. But, I think she could be beat this year. Timing is everything and I'm just waiting for the right time.

"In her own way, she's a liberated female. She is a free spirit. To some degree, I am liberated, too. If a woman does a man's work, she should be paid an equal salary. Women can go to work if they want to, but they should be home in time to cook their husband's dinner.

"Me, I like to be treated like a woman. I'm in love with a wonderful man and he knows how to treat me. I'm going to wrestle another five years, get married, settle down and raise a family. I can take the lonely nights until then. The understanding I get from my fiance makes it that much easier."

Such is love. It makes the world go round and Peggy Patterson a winner. Moolah had better look out.

Tor Kamata: HE STRIKES LIKE A COBRA

BY FRANK AMATO

A former Japanese Sumo wrestling champion, Tor Kamata will not rest until he holds the WWWF title. Till then, he is employing the most vicious of tactics in the ring . . . and loving every minute of it.

Kamata, on right, has delivered a Karate Chop to Ivan Putski, who reels under the attack.

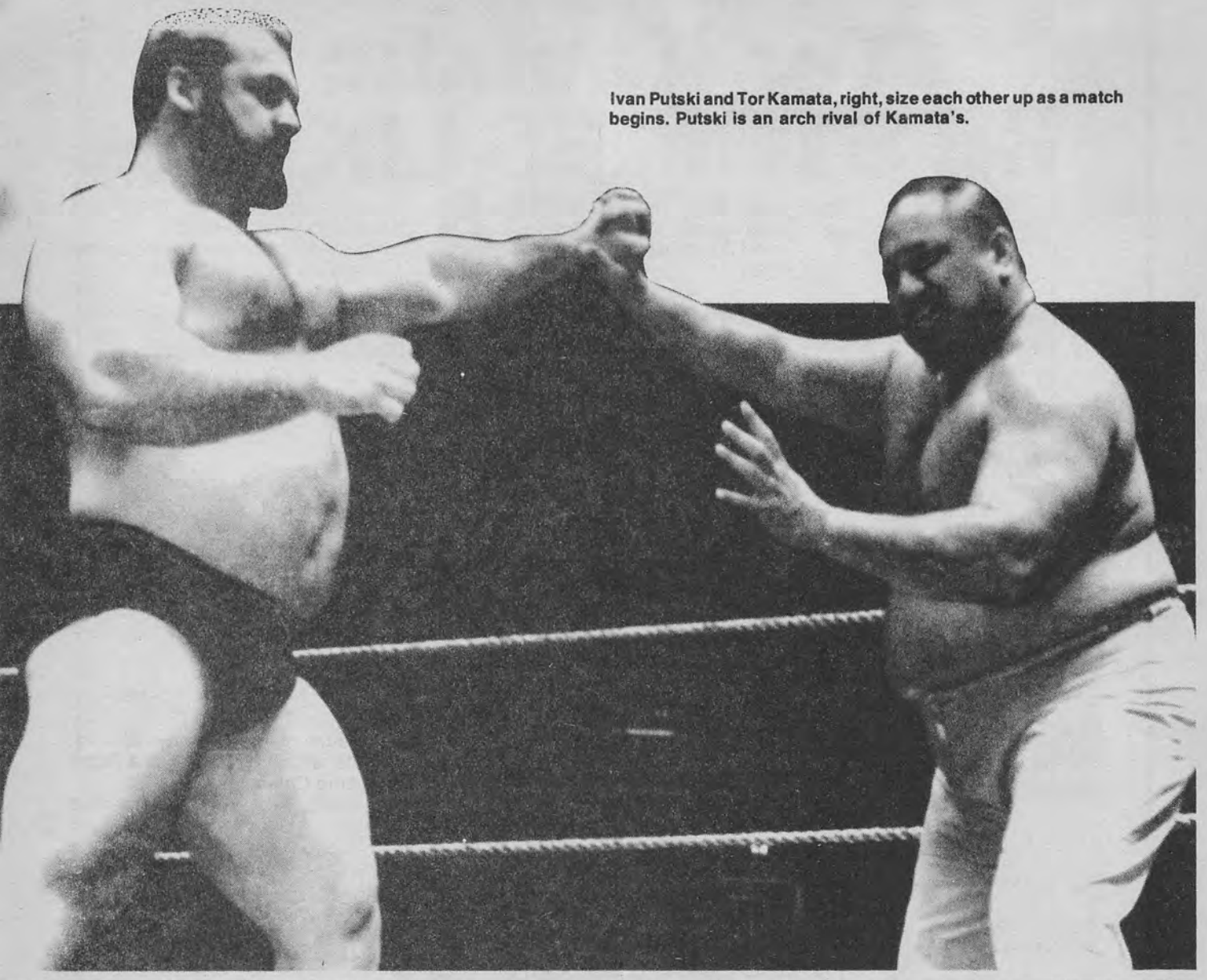
The boos ring out as Tor Kamata enters the ring for battle. Kamata pays little attention to the jeers of the fans. He does not let their biased attitude get under his skin. He has been a professional wrestler too long for that to happen. He stands at his ring corner, either staring down at the mat or across the ring at his opponent. Tor Kamata always wears a colorful robe made exclusively for him in Japan. He has a wide assortment of such robes.

Tor Kamata is a six-foot, 310-pound wrestler from Tokyo, Japan. His hair is cut close to his scalp in military fashion. On his feet he wears wooden Japanese sandals. He sports a Fu-Manchu mustache and small chin whiskers. Only his eyes give any hint of emotion. That cold, steel-eyed look. Pure venom.

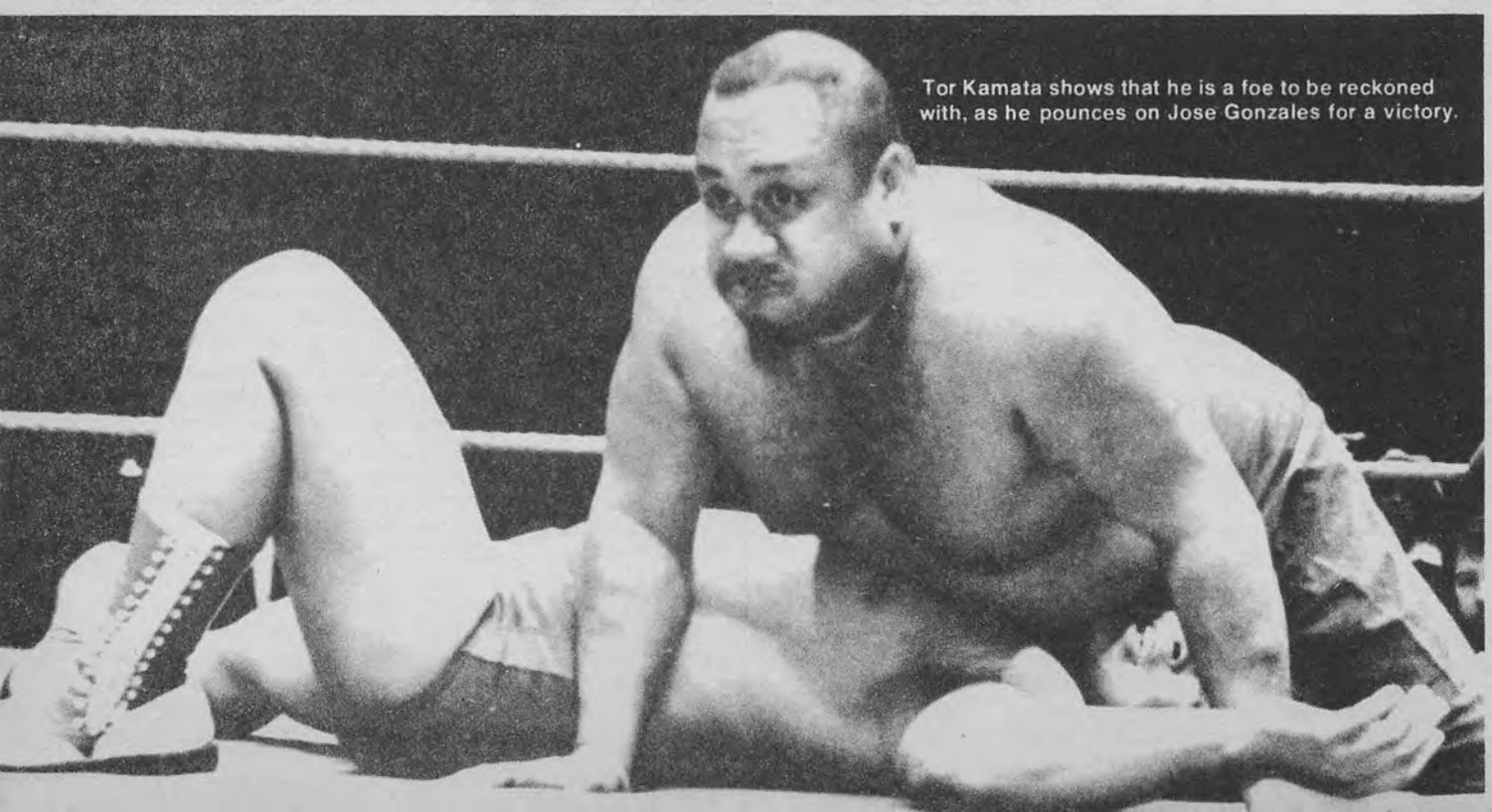
After being introduced by the announcer, Tor Kamata removes his robe. Then, from the waistband of his ring pants, which are gray and baggy looking, Kamata removes a packet of salt. He then walks to each ring corner throwing some salt. This is a ceremony Japanese wrestlers use to ward off evil spirits. After doing this, Kamata performs another Oriental ceremony. He places one hand on his waist and then raises one leg out and brings it down hard onto the mat. Then he does this again with his other hand and leg.

Once this is accomplished Tor Kamata is ready to combat his opponent. As he weighs over 300 pounds Kamata carries a big girth, but he moves quickly for a big man. His moves are deliberate with no wasted motion. He never takes his eyes away from his opponent. Tor Kamata waits for an opening and then he strikes like a cobra.

Kamata uses his Oriental training to great advantage. A black belt Karate expert, he sends Karate chops quickly to the head and throat. Kamata calls this his softening up process. Kamata smiles as he displays his martial arts. When Kamata has his opponent against the ropes and drives a knee into the midsection, he smiles again—even when



Ivan Putski and Tor Kamata, right, size each other up as a match begins. Putski is an arch rival of Kamata's.



Tor Kamata shows that he is a foe to be reckoned with, as he pounces on Jose Gonzales for a victory.

Above: (top) Tor Kamata chokes Jose Gonzales as the referee checks the hold; (center) Kamata becomes angrier as his match gets rougher by the minute; (bottom) the Japanese wrestler holds the arm of Pete Sanchez while sending a blow to the midsection.

the referee warns him that this is an illegal tactic.

Tor Kamata uses many legal holds, including Armlocks, Leglocks and Bodyslams. He loves to vary his attack. When he is out of sight of the preying eyes of the referee, Kamata will use a choke on his opponent. If caught by the referee, Kamata just smiles with a shrug of innocence. As the match wears on Kamata slowly, but deliberately, batters his opponent. From ringside Tor Kamata's manager, Fred Blassie, smiles with approval.

When Tor Kamata is ready to end a match, he usually does so with two special maneuvers. One is his Japanese Sleeper. The other is called The Kamakazie Drop. This is performed by Kamata first Bodyslamming his opponent, then climbing to the top turnbuckle and hurling his huge body onto the prostrate opponent. This sets up the pin fall. So far no wrestler has survived these two maneuvers.

Another deft maneuver Tor Kamata employs is his double Karate Thrust. Kamata performs this by pouncing off the ropes, on his victim. Then, sliding on his knees, he takes both hands, his fingers held out rigidly, and thrusts them upwards into the throat. This maneuver also results in a victory.

When the victory has been won, Fred Blassie enters the ring, waving his cut-away cane, smiling. If Kamata has won with his Japanese Sleeper, Blassie will try to keep the referee occupied while Kamata chokes the sleeping opponent. Again, Kamata smiles while choking his opponent.

Tor Kamata and Fred Blassie enter their dressing room very jubilant, fresh from their victory. The boos can still be heard from the ring area. Blassie slams the door closed. "Those pencilneck geeks don't deserve to witness Tor Kamata in action!" he exclaims. "They are used to seeing Sammartino, Brazil, Putski, Strongbow and all those others. How can they compare those bums to Kamata?"

"You know, I've spent a small fortune to bring this man to America. He's a great champion in Japan. He is the Austra-Asian Champion. Even among his own Japanese wrestlers he has beaten the best. He has even trained many for pro wrestling. Look at his hands and feet. They are deadly weapons. He can break wooden boards and cement blocks with one mighty blow. I'm going to make this man champion."

Tor Kamata walks over carrying a towel, wiping perspiration from his face and body. He comments, "Mr. Blassie san number one manager. In Japan my own people bow to his greatness. They follow him wherever he goes. When Blassie san say to Kamata come to America and make me world champion, Kamata no hesitate. Kamata want championship. Kamata in wrestling ten year now. World champion first on mind. I take this Sammartino and crush him. Blassie san say, 'Do this,' and Kamata do what he says."

How did Fred Blassie come across Tor Kamata? Fred explains, "I first saw Tor Kamata in Canada a few years ago. He was wrestling Abdullah the Butcher, as I remember. Well, Butcher is considered a real tough cookie. What Kamata did to him impressed me. He took Butcher and beat him at his own game. I told Kamata then if he ever wanted a manager [to] look me up. Then, several months ago, I went to Japan and Tor was wrestling. He beat all the opposition with ease. We got to talking and here he is."

The credentials of Tor Kamata are highly impressive. He has held the Canadian Championship; Austra-Asian Championship; Japanese Championship twice; was twice coholder of Japan's Tag Team Championship; and held the Australian Heavyweight Championship. Before turning to pro wrestling, Kamata, at 350 pounds, was a Sumo Wrestling Champion.

In Japan, Tor Kamata has wrestled the very best that the country has had to offer—Baba the Giant; Shozo Kobayashi; Antonio Inoki; Jumbo Tsuruta; Takachio, Thunder Sugiyama.

In the WWWF Tor Kamata has risen steadily towards a title match with champion Bruno Sammartino. Once he even received a title bout in New Haven, Connecticut. Kamata did not win, but he did come *very close* to dethroning Sammartino.

Tor Kamata explains his loss: "This Sammartino run from Kamata. Kamata say fight like a man but Sammartino run. Referee take side of champion, say Kamata use illegal tactics. Not so. My Karate not illegal. Referee say Japanese Sleeper choke hold. This a lie. Kamata get how you say here . . . raw deal. Yes, raw deal because referee biased man. He help protect champion. Kamata no use illegal tactics. Kamata number one wrestler, using honorable holds."

In watching Tor Kamata wrestle it is quite evident that Kamata enjoys inflicting punishment on his opponents. Not only enjoys it, but takes pure delight in it. Or does he just like to smile when inflicting punches, kicks, and Karate chops?

Fred Blassie explains: "Since when does smiling in a match become illegal? Tor loves to smile. He enjoys his work. I know I smile when

Kamata here wrestles. He is great at what he does. He wins and that is what I pay him for. He can laugh all night."

Tor Kamata has his own opinion: "Kamata great number one wrestler. I want opponents to know this. Kamata no punish wrestlers. Kamata torture them. I love to torture my opponents. Kamata take great pleasure when torture opponents. Kamata want opponents to fear him. Kamata very best in torture. Blassie san say hurt opponents so Kamata do it. Kamata don't care."

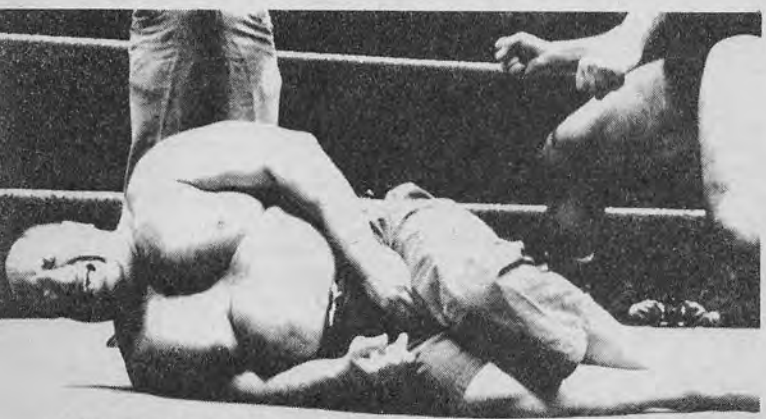
It is clear that Tor Kamata loves to torture his opponents. He doesn't even care if he injures them, temporarily or permanently. The salt he uses for his ceremony prior to his matches occasionally finds its way into the eyes of his opponents. Ivan Putski; Bobo Brazil; Chief Jay Strongbow; Jose Gonzales and Bruno Sammartino have had this foreign substance thrown in their eyes.

Fred Blassie denies this vehemently: "Show me one ounce of proof. Tor Kamata doesn't need to use salt for any purpose [other] than using it in his ceremony. I don't deny that salt may find its way into their eyes but only because during the match this salt gets kicked around and these dummies rub their eyes and perhaps salt is on their hands. We can't control this. It is pure sour grapes on their part."

Recently Tor Kamata and Nikolai Volkoff lost their big title chance for the WWWF Tag Team Championship against Strongbow and White Wolf when Blassie threw salt in Strongbow's eyes. Blassie screams, "I never threw the salt! It was an error, because I went to take out my handkerchief and the packet of salt flew out and Strongbow got too close. The referee saw what he wanted to see. I can't help that."

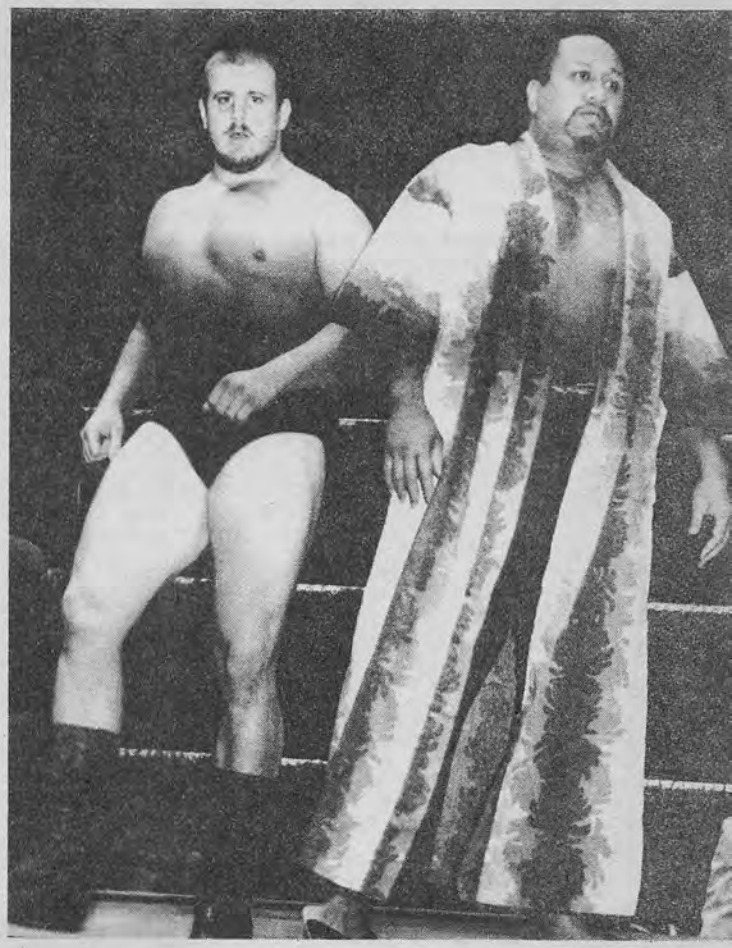
Tor Kamata still searches for his title chance. In the meantime, he still takes pleasure in torturing his opponents as he claims. Fred Blassie is proud of that. Tor Kamata is proud of that. True wrestling fans are not. Tor Kamata just shrugs his shoulders and smiles.

Right: (upper photo) Tor Kamata tied up Pete Sanchez with this Roll-up for a pin fall victory.

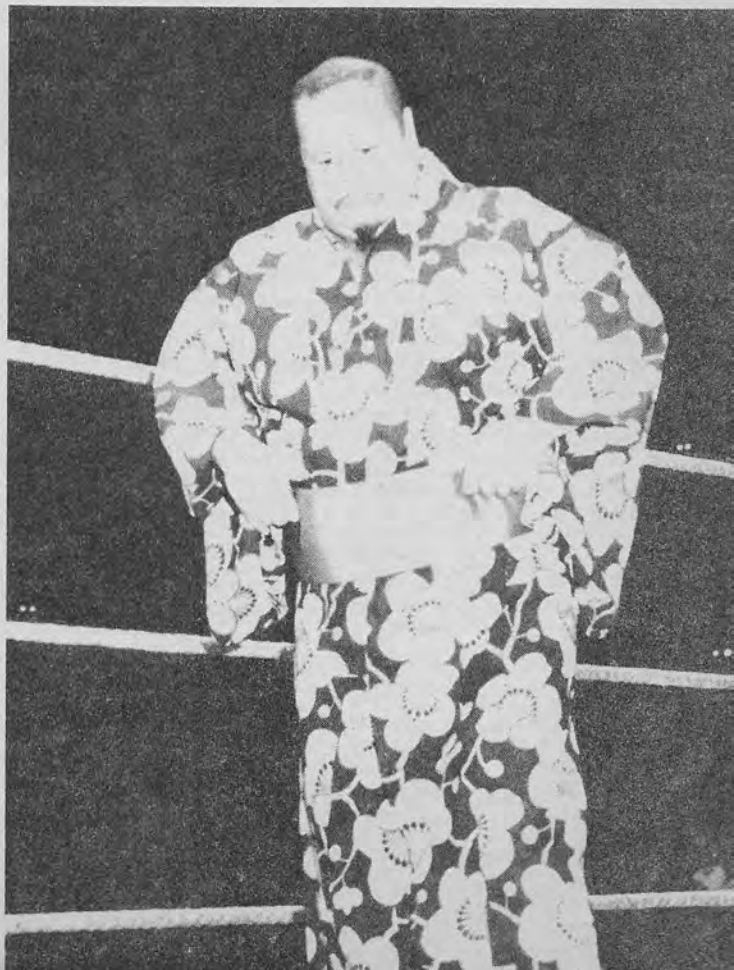


Tor Kamata writhes in pain after tasting some of the effects of his own brand of mayhem.

Left: In his Japanese pre-match ceremony, Tor Kamata throws salt to the four winds. The salt finds its way into the eyes of opponents as well.



Above: Kamata and tag partner Nikolai Volkoff enter the ring. Below: Kamata displays one of the many colorful robes which he always wears before a match.



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Above: Holding Sammartino by the neck, Ken Patera prepares to smash his knee into Bruno's head. Right: Patera measures Sammartino for a powerful right punch. Lower right: Patera goes all out to choke Bruno Sammartino into submission as referee Danny Barfield gives a warning.

KEN PATERA

Continued from page 23

the AWA but not like this. By following the rules I was being taken advantage of. Normally, I'm a good-natured man. I'm slow to get mad. Now, these wrestlers mistook this easy-going manner of mine and figured I'm slow-witted. Just plain dumb. I'm neither dumb nor slow-witted. My only fault was being decent."

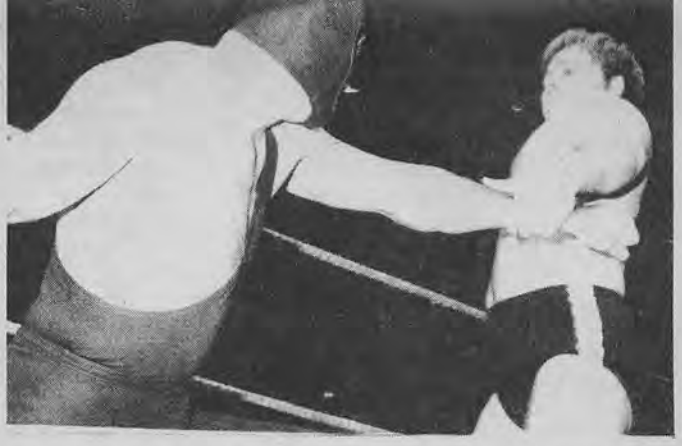
It took one particular match to change Ken Patera's way of thinking.

"In this match," says Patera, "I tried abiding by the rules. It cost me the match, blood and a big payday. Not to mention a title match for the NWA title. In the dressing room afterwards, Lou Albano was waiting when I returned. He laughed in my face. Called me a dumbjohn for taking all that pushing around. He said [that] with my ability and his great managerial knowledge he could and would make me the next WWWF Champ. I listened for hours and I was convinced. From then on, I turned from Mr. Nice Guy to breaking the rules. You know, Albano was right. From that time on, I became a different wrestler. So the fans booed me, but now I made those other wrestlers fear me. I loved it."

That was nearly a year ago. Now Patera is rampaging through the WWWF like a human whirlwind. His pet hold, a Neckbreaker, has leveled many wrestlers. After Ken clamps on this hold, he lifts his opponent and swings him around, while still applying extreme pressure; thus, the hold is called "The Swinging Neckbreaker." Already, three wrestlers have been hospitalized as a result of it. Both Kevin Sullivan and Johnny Rivera wear surgical neck collars today from this vicious hold. Their ring careers are still in doubt.

Ken Patera says of this hold, "Only I can apply it a certain way. I have the strength to defeat any wrestler. I've never gone out of my way to injure any wrestler. If they have thin necks, that is their problem. This hold will win me the WWWF title. I also use a Bearhug with equal ability. I have the strength to crush even Sammartino with this hold. My Bearhug is stronger than Bruno's. I can't wait to catch Sammartino in my Swinging Neckbreaker. I've read about what Stan Hansen did to Bruno's neck. I'll finish what Hansen started. I want that belt. I will win the world title."

"Your days are numbered, Sammartino," boasts Patera. "I've beaten you once so far. The next time, you hit the referee on purpose and kept your precious belt. Well, the time is growing short. I want that belt. I will crush you and become the next living legend. Me, Ken Patera."



Above: Larry holds the arm of Executioner #1 . . . and twists . . . and twists . . . and twists. Below: Zbyzsko bends the arm of Executioner #2 with an Armlock.

Above: Caught in Executioner #1's Clawhold, a determined Larry Zbyzsko prepares to pound on the masked man's head.

LARRY ZBYZSKO

Continued from page 47

this youngster convinced Bruno that this boy meant business. Bruno took an immediate liking to Larry and told him he would train him, but only if he completed his schooling from high school to college. The young boy agreed.

In the years to come, Larry Zbyzsko was trained by Bruno. Larry built up his body with weights, with Bruno overseeing the training. In time, Bruno worked out with Larry in the gym teaching him the holds and moves of a wrestler, the legal and illegal tactics he would encounter. The training was rough and vigorous, but Larry endured. Bruno was impressed by the young man. He knew Larry had the makings of a future mat star.

When Larry had completed two years of college, Bruno decided that he was ready to embark on his wrestling career. Bruno swelled with pride as Larry showed far more experienced wrestlers what hard, disciplined training can do. Zbyzsko quickly rolled up victory after victory. The fans marveled at the physical makeup of the young man as compared to his idol, Bruno Sammartino. Not only was the physical resemblance strong, but he even wrestled like Bruno.

At first, the comparison between Bruno and himself bothered Larry. He resented being called a carbon copy. This does not bother him today, though. Comments Larry, "When I was ready to wrestle, Bruno told me to be myself. I went out and did. I'm sorry if I wrestle like Bruno, but he did train me. I guess some of his moves and mannerisms wore off. Still, I do wrestle differently from Bruno. I'm not physically as strong as Bruno, so I can't perform certain feats of strength like him. I have to use more holds and execute them in my own way. Back when I started five years ago I was young and impressionable. Things said hurt me. Now I'm an experienced wrestler. I'm my own man. I'm making it on my own."

Larry has never backed away from any challenge. He meets them all head on. The first real test Larry encountered was back during his first months in wrestling. One night he substituted for an injured wrestler against seasoned mat villain Baron Mikel Scicluna. Larry showed the fans and Scicluna how far he would go, by holding Scicluna to a Draw. A few weeks later, he defeated Scicluna.

In five years of pro wrestling, Larry has wrestled many top opponents. Many have been very tough. Says Larry, "I have to rate Killer Kowalski; Stan Stasiak; Larry Hennig; Nikolai Volkoff and Don Leo Jonathan as giving me much trouble in singles competition. In tag team matches, there is The Valiants; Executioners; Hangman and Roddy Piper; and Gene and Ole Anderson, as the toughest I've faced."

As all wrestlers dream of winning the world title, so does Larry Zbyzsko. He surely would love to hold the WWWF belt someday. Even wrestle Bruno for it? Comments Larry, "I'd hate to, really. I hope that day never comes. If I'm pressured into such a match, I will do it. Even against Bruno. In fact, I talked to Bruno about this. He told me never to skirt around an issue. If my time ever comes where I'm faced with meeting him, he said wrestle him with all the power in me. Forget our friendship, and try to win the title. One thing I will say is, I'll never resort to turning out like Spiros Arion did. I could never do that against Bruno. I owe him too much."

Larry Zbyzsko has come a long way from the young boy who hid behind bushes to catch a glimpse of his idol. Now, he is making it on his own. And nobody is prouder of that than Bruno Sammartino.

Continued from page 27

The Cincinnati Police bomb squad examined the car, owned by The Sheik and in his legal name. They found a small bomb.

"They told us it was a professional job," said The Wizard. "The irony was, it wouldn't have killed The Sheik. Wherever we go, we have someone in the parking lot get our car near a back exit so we can get out of town fast before the show ends. He would've been blown up. Not us."

He seemed resigned to surviving, hopefully, more misadventures.

"The money is good," he said.

Who is this strange man? He's a native of Canton, Ohio. That much is known. Back there, old timers claim he once worked as a disc jockey for a local radio station and emceed wrestling shows in the Canton area.

After Canton, his trail is fuzzy between known stops in Steubenville and Indianapolis for more radio work. Fourteen years ago he surfaced as a wrestling manager for the first time. He had the Stevens Brothers, Don and Ray.

A long association with The Sheik, that continues, followed. Bruiser Brody, Mr. Fuji and Professor Taru Tanaka were added over the next ten years. Stasiak is the newest addition to The Wizard's profitable stable.

"They're all with me still," he said. "I don't change guys very often. I treat 'em right."

Before he began putting his stable together, however, The Grand Wizard had maintained his wrestling associations from the safe side of a ringside microphone in San Francisco. He then moved to Calgary, where he headed the largest syndicated wrestling show in Canada.

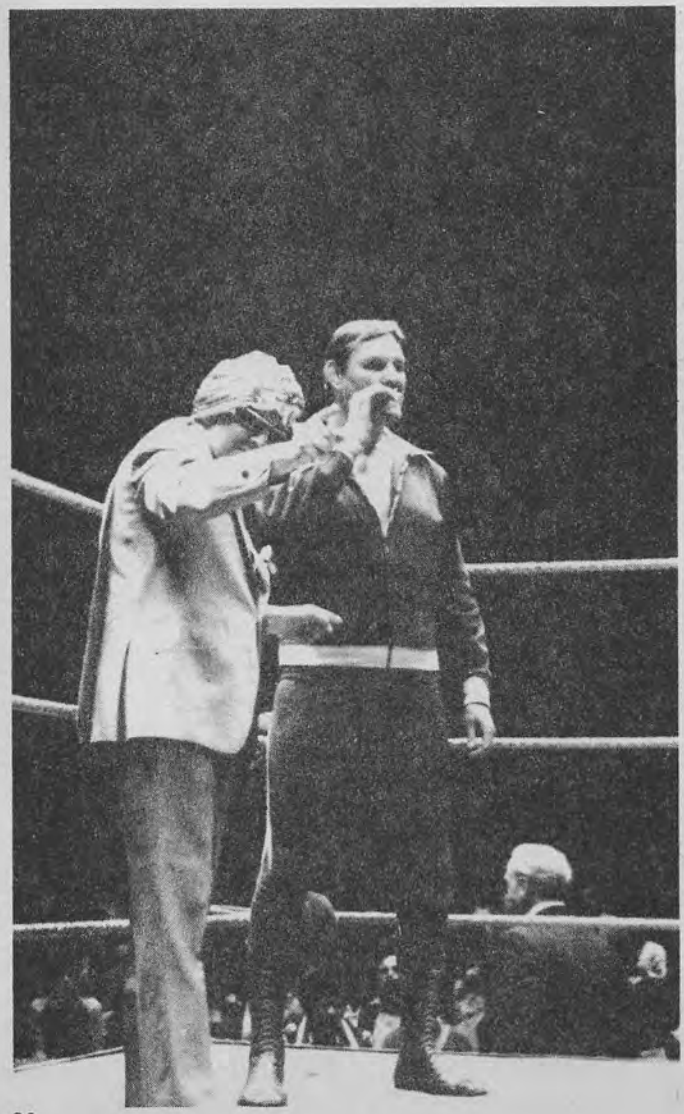
"I've learned one thing from all of this," The Grand Wizard said. "People sometimes AREN'T funny."

A head appeared at the dressing room door.

"Get Stasiak," the mouth in the head said.

The Grand Wizard reached for his headpiece, summoned his wrestling star, and a few minutes later had the Garden in an uproar before Stasiak or Bruno even worked up a sweat. A real wizard is The Grand Wizard.

The Wizard instructs the legendary Killer Kowalski on how to wrestle an opponent.



Below: The Grand Wizard takes extremely good care of his costumes.

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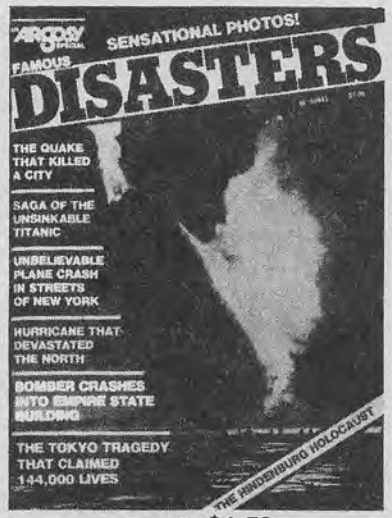
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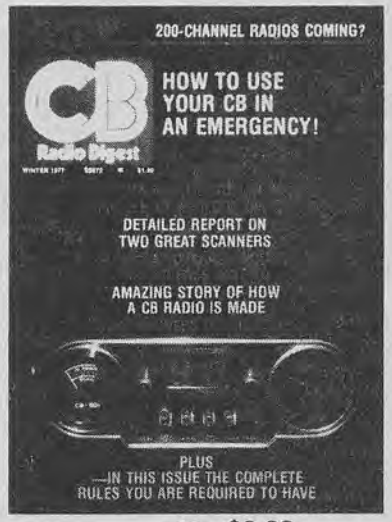
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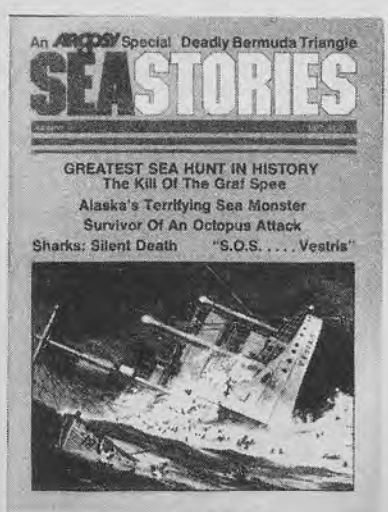
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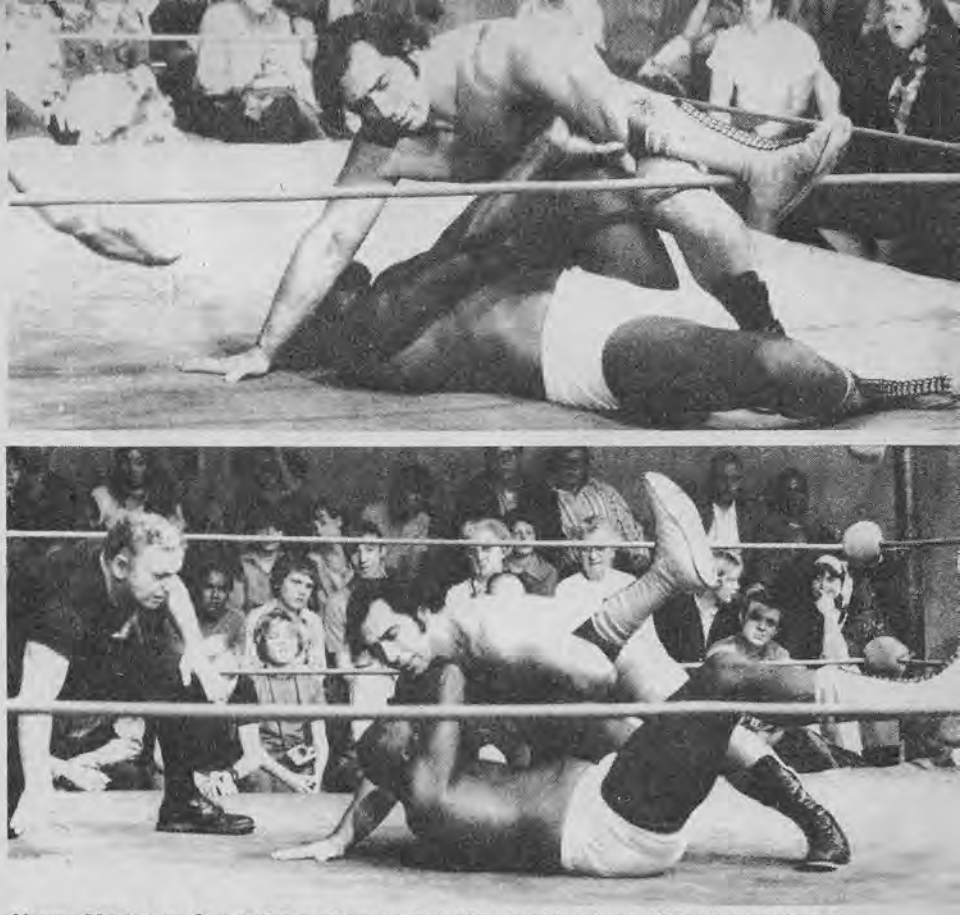
Above: Marino, a former Mr. America, shows off his physique for his fans.



Above: Marino vs. Sonny King—(upper photo) Marino tries to pin King; (lower photo) Marino bends Sonny King's leg backward during a Detroit match.

TONY MARINO *Continued from page 41*

home to Rochester. After several telephone calls proved futile, he returned to Buffalo three days later.

"I was determined to have a showdown with Martinez," remarked Marino. "Either he was going to let me wrestle or not. I had to know where I stood. However, his secretary wouldn't let me in to see him. So, I stormed past her and busted through the door to Martinez' office.

"I don't care if you are a big promoter, either I am going to wrestle or I am not. But I have to know. This waiting is killing me. If it's no, then I'll put the thought of becoming a wrestler out of my mind. But I have to know.' All Martinez did was smile and told me to sit down and take it easy. The next thing he did was pick up the phone and place a long distance call to promoter Fred Kohler in Chicago. I didn't know what was taking place.

"All I heard was Martinez' end of the conversation. 'He's a good boy. He's good-looking and has a great body and he's willing. Okay, fine. How about October 1?' Then he hung up and explained what the phone call was all about. What Martinez had done was to book me for my debut in Chicago's Marigold Arena. I was quite surprised because I thought I would make my debut in Buffalo, where I had trained all those months. But Martinez explained that there would be too much local pressure on me in Buffalo and that it would be better if I wrestled out of town for awhile. So I agreed and I happily went to Chicago."

Marino's trip wasn't in vain. He faced Count Verdi in his first professional match and emerged victorious. It sent the adrenalin flowing through his body. This was what Marino had dreamed of during all those years of frustration. The triumph keyed the rest of the year for Marino. It resulted in one success after the other. When the year was over, Marino was voted the "rookie of the year."

"I was very nervous before my first match," confessed Marino. "I felt the way I did before a football game, tense, a bit on edge. But, like in football, after the first contact was made, I felt all right. I knew that wrestling was my sport."

Over the years, Marino has enjoyed great success. He has appeared successfully in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and in the south, midwest and the west coast. He's also made three trips to Japan, in 1963, '65 and '68 and hopes to make another in '73. He is quite popular in Japan where fans have named him the "beautiful animal."

With the success, Marino has suffered his share of pain, like most wrestlers. His most serious injury was the one that required 76 stitches to close a gaping wound in his right leg. Marino suffered the injury 11 years ago in Cleveland in a match against Killer Kowalski. A riot developed and a flying chair broke several of the lights above the ring. Marino fell and landed on the broken glass which was strewn all over the canvas. The injury sidelined Marino for five months.

Marino is popular with wrestling fans wherever he appears. The Cobra Twist is his favorite hold. Marino executes it in precision fashion. He twists his leg around his opponent's leg. Then he wraps his powerful body around part of his foe and entwines his arms around the back of his opponent's neck and shoulders. Quickly, Marino then comes around the front of his opponent's head with his other arm and clasps his hands together while exerting pressure. The submission hold has never been broken, which is a tribute to Marino's strength.

What Marino would like most is to apply the hold on the likes of The Sheik or Pampero Firpo. Marino is on a personal crusade to annihilate both.

"Both of them should be banned from wrestling," fumed Marino. "Their tactics are deplorable. Wrestling is my life, what I live for and The Sheik and Firpo don't belong in it. I'll get each of them in time."

Time is one thing Marino knows about. He suffered years of frustration before he became a wrestler. But that's all behind him now. ■